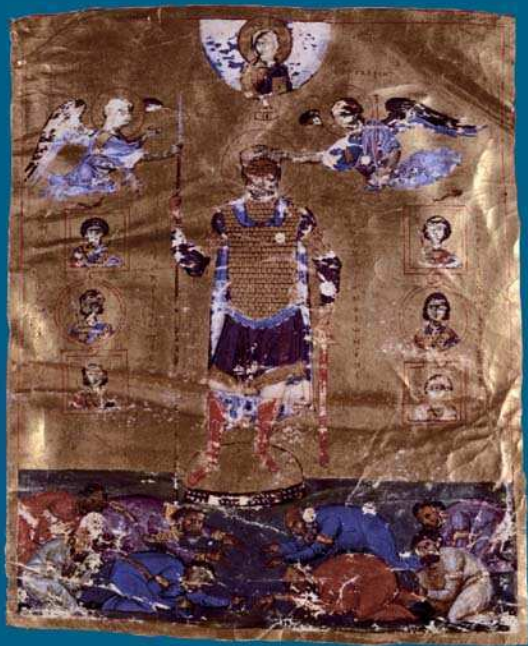


THE MEDIEVAL MEDITERRANEAN * BRILL

Byzantium in the Year 1000

Edited by Paul Magdalino



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BYZANTIUM IN THE YEAR 1000

THE MEDIEVAL MEDITERRANEAN

PEOPLES, ECONOMIES AND CULTURES, 400-1500

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VOLUME 45



BYZANTIUM IN THE YEAR 1000

EDITED BY

PAUL MAGDALINO



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PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

To the memory of Nikos Oikonomides and Lenos Mavromatis

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PREFACE

This volume grew out of the Byzantine session of the 19th Congress of Historical Sciences at Oslo. With the Congress scheduled for August 2000, it did not require much effort of imagination to find a theme. The subject of Byzantium at the end of the first millennium A.D. would have suggested itself even if the date had been completely devoid of historical significance. In fact, the choice was far from being purely arbitrary or symbolic. The year 1000 A.D. marks the middle of a century which saw the medieval Byzantine Empire at the height of its military and political power. Between 950 and 1050, the empire of New Rome reconquered the islands of Crete and Cyprus, and went on to regain a substantial amount of continental territory in Syria, Northern Mesopotamia, the Balkans and Southern Italy, which it had lost in the seventh and eighth centuries, as well as annexing more of Armenia than had ever been ruled by the ancient Roman Empire. Its political and cultural influence extended beyond its frontiers, not only to the principalities and tribes which were its immediate neighbours, and to the ancient centres of the Christian world, Rome and Jerusalem, which remained tantalisingly beyond its military grasp; with the conversion of Rus, symbolised by the baptism of Prince Vladimir of Kiev in 989, its magnetism reached far to the north of the Black Sea, into what for the Romans had been the dark wastes of Scythia. The decades before and after the year 1000 also tend to be seen as the high point of Byzantine imperial absolutism, the period when centuries of administrative, economic and ideological centralisation came to fruition, and the Byzantine emperor controlled the resources, the lives and the beliefs of his subjects as never before or since.

The emperor in the year 1000 and the generations on either side of it was Basil II (976–1025), whose name is emblematic of the greatness of the medieval Byzantine state. It is not just that Basil's reign came chronologically at the end of a series of interrelated developments which characterise the political and cultural 'renaissance' of Byzantium in the ninth and tenth centuries: a long succession of strong and effective emperors, all more or less closely identified with the dynasty founded by Basil II's great-great grandfather, Basil I the

‘Macedonian’; an ideology of restoration, recovery and renewal, expressed in an imperially-sponsored programme of collecting, codifying, excerpting and re-issuing the written legacy of the Greco-Roman past; a growing professionalism in the armed forces, backed by a revival of military theory; a closer identification of the Church with the interests of the State, and particularly of the ruling dynasty; a consistent effort to advance the cause of the imperial fisc by legislation and in the administration of justice. Basil himself has gone down in history as the Byzantine ‘l’état c’est moi’, the paradigm of efficient, successful state control—so much so that the problems of the Byzantine state in the late eleventh century have been blamed on his excessive insistence on the domination of the imperial periphery by the bureaucratic, Constantinopolitan centre. To some extent, his reputation was created after the eleventh-century crisis by nostalgia for the better times which he had seemed to incarnate. Thus the Grottaferrata text of *Digenes Akrites*, a work dating from the twelfth century and set in the eastern borderlands which by that time had been lost to the empire, refers to him as ‘Basil who took imperial glory to the grave with him’. It was not until the late twelfth century, with the revolt of Peter and Asan and the establishment of the ‘Second Bulgarian Empire’, that Basil became known as *Boulgaroktonos*, the Bulgar-Slayer. But the idealisation of Basil as a model emperor began before the twelfth century. It has been detected in the two main Greek sources for his reign, the *Chronographia* of Michael Psellos and the *Synopsis* of John Skylitzes, which can be seen, in their different ways, to reflect the agenda of imperial revival under the first two Comnenian emperors, Isaac I (1057–1059) and Alexios I (1081–1118), whose family had done well under Basil and had good reason to identify retrospectively with his regime. Both sources have enduringly shaped later perceptions of his reign. To Psellos we owe the portrait of Basil as the harsh, austere, parsimonious despot with no time for luxury or literature, while Skylitzes is responsible for the view that Basil concentrated on the Balkans and the destruction of Bulgaria at the expense of Asia Minor and the advancement of the eastern frontier. Both historians have by their emphasis created the impression of a reign dominated at the outset by massive military rebellions, and dedicated thereafter to eradicating aristocratic faction and civil war. Ultimately, however, the image of Basil II the grim autocrat stems from his own publicity: from the threatening anti-magnate rhetoric of his Novel of 996, and from the miniature of

the Venice Psalter depicting him armed and triumphant with barbarians grovelling at his crimson-shod imperial feet.

The composite picture of Byzantium at the peak of its achievement under Basil II was central to modern perceptions of Byzantium in the nineteenth and for most of the twentieth century. This was not only because the different components fitted together so plausibly, but also because the composition represented what Byzantinists and the regimes or ideologies they served most wanted to find in Byzantium: the perfect moment of a state system with an impeccable Greco-Roman pedigree which was triumphant over Islam and northern barbarism, yet did not have—indeed, energetically resisted—the dark forces of feudalism and Catholic clericalism which were the bane of the Western Middle Ages. This basic consensus united Greeks, Slavs and Western scholars with a classical education. It received its fullest articulation in the synthetic histories of the mid-twentieth century which remain among the most coherent and readable narratives of Byzantine history, and it continues to inform more recent literature. Yet the story has become progressively less clear in the light of three trends in recent scholarship. Firstly, the uncoupling of economic, social and cultural history from political and military history has led to the realisation that under Basil II, battles and borders apart, the peak of Byzantine achievement was still to come, in a pattern of development which was not simply imposed by the expansion of the Latin West but paralleled and shared in the dynamics of Western expansionism. In this, Basil could be seen less as the ruler who brought the medieval Byzantine system to perfection than as a reactionary who repressed its natural evolution. But this might be to credit Basil with too much personal initiative and input. A second trend in recent scholarship has been to deconstruct the image of the grim autocrat by looking critically at each of the main sources in the context of its composition, and by questioning the key motifs which make up the myth of ‘Basil the Terrible’: his accumulation of untold surplus wealth, hoarded in specially excavated chambers; his disdain for culture; his blinding of 15,000 defeated Bulgarians. The idea that Basil persecuted the aristocracy has also come in for criticism on the grounds that several aristocratic families, including, as we have seen, the Komnenoi, did very well during Basil’s reign. This is consistent with a third concern which certain recent and forthcoming studies of the period have in common: a tendency to emphasise that the expansion of the Byzantine state in the tenth

century and its subsequent consolidation were achieved by methods which were not particularly 'statist' in either an ancient or a modern sense. It has been argued that the Byzantine state had no coherent strategy of expansion in the east, and that its expansionism in the early tenth century was primarily concerned with securing the personal loyalty and co-operation of Christian elites in Armenia and the Caucasus, rather than with the annexation of Muslim-dominated territory to the south. The subsequent military reconquest of Cilicia and northern Syria by a new model army driven by an official programme of holy war has been interpreted as the unpremeditated extension of an initially defensive and rhetorical reaction against the aggression of an especially formidable border emir. When new territories were annexed and their resources assigned to the imperial fisc, it is suggested that the imperial government relied for their exploitation on previously existing structures and local elites rather than on the imposition of fiscal bureaucracy. On the European side, the map that is now emerging of the northern Balkans after the liquidation of the Bulgarian kingdom no longer shows a solid, purple-coloured bloc of imperial provinces separated from the barbarian world by the hard black line of a fortified Danube frontier; rather it shows a permeable frontier zone where the permanent imperial military presence was restricted to the lower Danube and scaled down fairly soon after the initial occupation. Further south, in the western heartland of the Bulgarian kingdom that Basil conquered from Tsar Samuel, his treatment of the Bulgarian church has been viewed as evidence that Basil initiated or promoted the policy of fiscal exemption which led to the growth of 'feudal' privilege in the late Byzantine period. 'In other words, Basil II, the emperor who tried to break the powerful and to restrict the church, would seem at the same time to have permitted (if not introduced) policies favouring the formation of client retinues by certain magnates.'¹

The contours of the peak of Byzantine achievement represented by Basil II are thus not as clear as they were fifty years ago. Yet on the map of Byzantine history, this remains an area of impressively high altitude. In military and political terms, it was undoubtedly Byzantium's finest moment. Basil's reign was one of superlatives: it was the longest in Byzantine history, and the one in which the

¹ N. Oikonomidès, *Fiscalité et exemption fiscale à Byzance (IX^e-XI^e s.)* (Athens, 1996), 177.

emperor, the only Byzantine sovereign who never married, was most completely above private interests and personal relations. For the first ten years of it, the government was dominated by an extraordinarily long-serving, capable and versatile eunuch ‘prime minister’, the *parakoimomenos* Basil; the young emperor also faced not just one but two military rebellions, each on a scale not seen since 821. Having overcome these internal threats to his power, he went on to terminate the existence of a formidable neighbouring state which for three hundred years had threatened the security of Constantinople and the empire’s hold on its European provinces. It is not only the rhetoric of Basil’s legislation and his historians which portrays him as extraordinarily devoted to the interests of the imperial fisc. Further evidence is provided by the eleventh-century judge Eustathios Romaïos, who spent much of his early career under Basil. In one of his judicial decisions (analysed below by Ludwig Burgmann) Eustathios stated that the patriarch Sisinnios had issued his famous decree of 997 ‘with the emperor’s intention’. The decree extended the degrees of relationship by affinity within which in-law relations were forbidden to marry; since it inhibited repeated intermarriage, and therefore the accumulation of inherited wealth, among small groups of aristocratic families, its promulgation in the year following Basil II’s Novel against the acquisition of land by the powerful cannot be coincidental. It seems to be a clear instance of the church serving the interests of the state at the emperor’s bidding. In the *Peira*, the collection of case law based on Eustathios’ judicial decisions, the anonymous compiler records how Eustathios had remarked that the emperor Basil used to move the imperial *paroikoi*, the peasants who cultivated state land, around frequently, in order to prevent them from acquiring rights of ownership (15.2).

It could be objected that the imperial judge who articulated these ‘facts’ in such a pro-imperial sense was himself projecting, or reflecting, a rhetoric rather than a reality of imperial power. But when a rhetoric of power is so persistently articulated, at first and second hand, does it not become part of that reality? The *Peira* shows Eustathios to have taken a consistently pro-fiscal line in his judicial pronouncements that upheld the land legislation of Basil II. His role in preserving and idealising Basil’s memory is a tribute to Basil’s effectiveness in imbuing his subordinates with a mentality corresponding to the emperor’s rhetorical image. Eustathios was not an isolated phenomenon, to judge from the way in which the interests of the fisc were

also upheld by two of his contemporaries, John the Orphanotrophos and Isaac Komnenos, who had been close to Basil in their youth. What Eustathios represented for the judiciary, John and Isaac represented for the fiscal bureaucracy and the army respectively.

The shape, dimensions and quality of the Byzantine imperial achievement around the year 1000 thus continue to deserve attention and require interpretation. The following chapters focus the attention of ten scholars who specialise in the interpretation of Byzantium in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The collection is not a synthesis, nor does it claim to be comprehensive—the church and the fiscal economy are among notable omissions—but it attempts to cover a broad spectrum. The first five chapters are concerned with imperial power. Jonathan Shepard analyses the context of two momentous foreign marriages which were arranged for Byzantine princesses in the late tenth century: that of Theophano to Otto II, and that of Basil II's sister Anna to Prince Vladimir of Kiev. Catherine Holmes discusses aspects of the relationship between the image and the reality of Basil's regime. The next three chapters consider the empire's territorial power base in Asia Minor (Jean-Claude Cheynet), along the Balkan frontier (Paul Stephenson), and in southern Italy (Vera von Falkenhausen). The transition from government and politics to culture is made in the chapter by Ludwig Burgmann, who analyses a judicial decision by Eustathios Romaïos documenting a failed attempt to use the decree of Sisinnios to contest a marriage; it also provides a rare opportunity to study the hero of the *Peira* in unabridged and unexcerpted form. The following three chapters look at developments in three types of literature which flourished under Basil II despite a general lack of imperial patronage and the tension which evidently existed between the emperor and the three main authors involved. Athanasios Markopoulos considers history writing, especially the work of Leo the Deacon. Marc Lauxtermann surveys the work of John Geometres and other poets. Christian Høgel reviews the evidence for the execution of the most ambitious project in medieval Greek hagiography: the improved, standardised edition of the complete corpus of Greek saints' lives undertaken by Symeon Metaphrastes. The volume concludes with an essay by the present author which attempts to demonstrate that the year 1000 meant something to Byzantines as well as to modern academics on the lookout for round-number anniversaries.

Chapters 2–7 originated in papers delivered at the Oslo Congress.

Chapters 1, 8 and 10 were commissioned and written after the event, and I am deeply grateful to Marc Lauxtermann and Jonathan Shepard for rising to the occasion at short notice. Without their contributions, the volume might not have been viable, depleted as it was by the deaths of the two scholars to whose memory this collection is dedicated. Lenos Mavromatis was regrettably unable to revise for publication the paper which he gave at Oslo ('L'éclosion de l'idée de la Nation-État à Byzance autour de l'an Mil'). By the time of the Congress, it was already too late for me to ask Nikos Oikonomides to contribute the chapter on Byzantine state finances under Basil II which only he could have written. It is a sad pleasure to record, however, that he made the volume possible in a different sense, for it was he, as secretary of the International Association for Byzantine Studies, who conveyed to me the Association's invitation to organise its session at the 19th Historical Congress. I hope the final result is something in which he would have liked to participate.

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AB</i>	<i>Analecta Bollandiana</i>
Attaleiates	<i>Michaelis Attaliotae Historia</i> , ed. I. Bekker, CSHB (Bonn, 1853)
<i>BF</i>	<i>Byzantinische Forschungen</i>
<i>BHG</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca</i>
<i>BMGS</i>	<i>Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies</i>
<i>BNJ</i>	<i>Byzantinisch-neugriechische Jahrbücher</i>
<i>Bsl</i>	<i>Byzantinoslavica</i>
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>Cah Arch</i>	<i>Cahiers Archéologiques</i>
<i>CCAG</i>	<i>Corpus Codicum Astrologorum Graecorum</i>
<i>CSCO</i>	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
<i>CFHB</i>	Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae
Cheyne,	
<i>Pouvoir</i>	J.-C. Cheynet, <i>Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance (963–1210)</i> Byzantina Sorbonensia 9 (Paris, 1990)
<i>CSHB</i>	Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae
<i>EEBS</i>	Ἑπετηρίς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν
Ibn Hauqal	Ibn Hauqal, <i>Configuration de la Terre (Kitāb surat al-Art)</i> . Introduction et traduction avec index par J.H. Kramers et G. Wiet, 2 vols. (Paris, 1964), vol. 1
<i>JÖB</i>	Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik
Leo Diac.	<i>Leonis Diaconi Caloënsis Historiae Libri Decem</i> , ed. C.B. Hase, CSHB (Bonn, 1828)
Matt.Ed.	Matthew of Edessa, <i>Chronicle</i> , trans. A.E. Dostourian, <i>Armenia and the Crusades in the Tenth to Twelfth Centuries: the Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa</i> , (Lanham, MD-New York-London, 1993)
<i>MGH</i>	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
Mich.Syr.	<i>Chronique de Michel le Syrien, Patriarche Jacobite d'Antioche (1166–1199)</i> , ed. and trans. J.B. Chabot, 3 vols. (Paris, 1905–1910; repr. 1963)
<i>ODB</i>	A. Kazhdan (ed.), <i>Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium</i> , 3 vols. (Oxford, 1991)
<i>PG</i>	Patrologia Graeca

PO	Patrologia Orientalis
Psellos, I–II	Michael Psellos, <i>Chronographia</i> , ed. and trans. E. Renauld, <i>Michel Psellos, Chronographie</i> , 2 vols. (Paris, 1926–8; repr. 1967)
<i>REB</i>	<i>Revue des études byzantines</i>
RIS	Rerum Italicarum Scriptores
<i>RSBN</i>	<i>Rivista de studi bizantini e neoellenici</i>
<i>SBS</i>	<i>Studies in Byzantine Sigillography</i> , vols. 1–6, ed. N. Oikonomides (Washington, D.C., 1987–1999), vol. 7 (forthcoming)
SC	Sources Chrétiennes
SubsHag	Subsidia Hagiographica
Skylitzes	<i>Ioannis Skylitzae Synopsis historiarum</i> , ed. J. Thurn, CFHB 5 (Berlin-New York, 1973)
StT	Studi e Testi
<i>Syn CP</i>	<i>Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae</i> , ed. H. Delehaye, <i>Prophylaeum ad AASS Novembris</i> (Brussels, 1902; repr. 1985)
Theoph. Cont.	Theophanes Continuatus, ed. I. Bekker, CSHB (Bonn, 1838)
<i>TM</i>	<i>Travaux et Mémoires</i>
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen
<i>VV</i>	<i>Vizantiyskiy Vremennik</i>
Yahya, I–III	<i>Histoire de Yahyá-ibn-Saʿid d'Antioche, Continueur de Saʿid-ibn-Bitriq</i> , I–II, ed. and trans. I. Kratchovsky, A. Vasiliev, PO 18 (1924), 699–832; 23 (1932), 347–520; III, ed. I. Kratchovsky, trans. F. Micheau and G. Troupeau, PO 47, fasc. 4 (1997).
<i>ŽRVI</i>	

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MARRIAGES TOWARDS THE MILLENNIUM

Jonathan Shepard

The evidence of 'barbarian' potentates' interest in forging marriage-ties with ladies of the imperial Byzantine house or, more generally, with court ladies in the generations spanning the year 1000 is fairly full in comparison with that for preceding eras. Allowance must, of course, be made for the vagaries of source survival and it is likely that numerous earlier negotiations concerning marriage-ties or formal betrothals came to nothing and have left no trace in our extant sources. But for a stray allusion by Nicholas Mystikos we would be unaware of the betrothal of a daughter of Leo VI to Louis III of Provence.¹ And the specific provision made by Constantine VII for coping with proposals of marriage to senior members of the imperial house from the 'infidel and dishonourable peoples of the north' implies that such requests had actually been made by the likes of the Rus, Hungarians and Khazars in the decades before c. 950.² Nonetheless, the apparent constellation of negotiations and actual marriages in the generations that followed is not just a mirage conjured up by more abundant sources. The Greek and Latin narratives for the period are not, in fact, especially full and their limitations are hardly offset by the light which the Rus *Primary Chronicle* begins to cast from that time forth.

¹ Nicholas I, Patriarch of Constantinople, *Letters*, ed. and trans. R.J.H. Jenkins and L.G. Westerink, CFHB 6 (Washington, DC, 1973), 218–21. It now seems very unlikely that the betrothal was followed up by an actual marriage: S. Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI (886–912). Politics and People* (Leiden, 1997), 148 and n. 77; O. Kresten, "Zur angeblichen Heirat Annas, der Tochter Kaiser Leons VI., mit Ludwig III. 'dem Blinden'", *Römische Historische Mitteilungen* 42 (2000), 171–7, 184–92, 201–06.

² Constantine's provision seems drawn from recent experience and intended for practical application, rather than being just a form of cautionary tale to be impressed upon an imperial infant: *De administrando imperio*, 13, ed. and tr. G. Moravcsik and R.J.H. Jenkins, CFHB 1 (Washington, DC, 1967) (henceforth *DAI*), 70–5. For an alternative view: C. Sode, "Untersuchungen zu De administrando imperio Kaiser Konstantins VII. Porphyrogenetos", *Varia*, V, ed. T. Pratsch et al., Poikila Byzantina 13 (Bonn, 1994), 205–06 and nn. 138–9, 254.

In many ways, the flurry of negotiations reflects the empire's standing among neighbouring elites at the end of the first millennium. This owed much to the military offensives that imperial forces had sustained to a degree not seen for centuries. But our sketch will also present the cluster of marriage-ties around that time as a measure of change in the world around Byzantium. New political formations were emerging and their leaders sought to define their status in apposition to older, well-established, seats of authority. Their quest for recognition and symbols of respect from the *basileus* was sometimes backed up by threats and outright hostilities. Moreover the marriages took place against a background of major internal rebellion. They reflect the brittleness of the imperial order at the very time of the expansion of Byzantium's armed forces, spectacular territorial gains and renewed aura of triumphalism.

At the same time Byzantium's rich political culture and Christian aura appealed to new elites still finding their way to their own rituals of rulership, especially Christian overlordship. Byzantine notions of the heavenly benediction conferred upon progeny conceived 'in the Purple' seem to have fallen upon receptive ground beyond the empire's borders.³ For those seeking to reserve hegemonial status for themselves and their offspring, visual symbols of authority that were at once imposing, readily recognizable and, in their lack of particular local or familial affiliations, 'neutral' were of the utmost political value. A lady 'from the palace of the Augustus', bringing with her 'countless wealth in treasures',⁴ was a status symbol in herself for a ruler eager to distinguish himself and his offspring from other members of his kin or nobility. The extent to which brides such as Theophano and Anna affected the political scenario and cultural life of their host countries specifically because they were 'Byzantine' is hard to evaluate. Even so, there are grounds for associating the presence of Theophano and Anna with certain cultural and religious developments in, respectively, the German-speaking and Rus lands. The princesses could act as catalysts for tendencies already under way, even when not delib-

³ See G. Dagron, "Nés dans la Pourpre", *TM* 12 (1994), 130–7, 140–1; Liudprand of Cremona, *Antapodosis*, IV. 18, in *Opera Omnia*, ed. P. Chiesa, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 156 (Turnhout, 1998), 107; W. Ohnsorge, "Das Mitkaisertum in der abendländischen Geschichte des früheren Mittelalters", repr. in his *Abendland und Byzanz* (Darmstadt, 1979), 271–2.

⁴ *Vita Mahthildis antiquior*, 15, ed. B. Schütte, *Die Lebensbeschreibungen der Königin Mathilde*, MGH SS in usum schol. 66 (Hanover, 1994), 140–1.

erately bringing about change, and they may well have remained in close enough contact with the Byzantine palace to enjoy favoured access to its products.⁵ Their effect, direct or indirect, on their respective host cultures has perhaps been underestimated.

The number of diplomatic exchanges about imperial or 'courtly' marriages recorded for the generation or so leading up to 1000 is greater than that recorded for earlier periods, but not strikingly so, while the quantity actually contracted is modest. Exchanges between Otto I and Nikephoros II began with Otto's bid in 967 for the hand of a Porphyrogenita for his son, whom he had already designated heir and co-emperor, the twelve-year-old Otto II. The proposal presented by Otto's Venetian envoy was followed by Liudprand's journey to Constantinople to fetch the girl, bring about the marriage and thereby end the hostilities that had broken out in the meanwhile.⁶ After the failure of Liudprand's mission and another bout of military conflict in Southern Italy, a third embassy was sent by Otto in 970–1 to negotiate peace and at the same time reach a marriage-agreement. The envoys, among whom Liudprand himself may well have figured, returned together with a bride for Otto II. She was 'not the maiden sought after', that is, a Porphyrogenita, but Theophano Skleraina, a niece-by-marriage of the newly acceded emperor, John Tzimiskes.⁷ Some sixteen years later, the newly installed king of the

⁵ A significant, albeit not precise, analogy is provided by Maria Lekapena, who brought many household goods with her to the Bulgarian court, and who reportedly 'often' returned to Constantinople in the early years of her marriage: Theophanes Continuatus, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, 1838), 422; J. Shepard, "A Marriage too Far? Maria Lekapena and Peter of Bulgaria", in A. Davids (ed.), *The Empress Theophano. Byzantium and the West at the Turn of the First Millennium* (Cambridge, 1995), 135.

⁶ Liudprand has Nikephoros say that 'we were friends and were thinking to enter into an indissoluble partnership (*societas*) by means of a marriage-tie', that is, the marriage between the Porphyrogenita and Otto II agreed with Dominicus: *Legatio*, 6, 7, 31, 36, in *Opera Omnia*, ed. Chiesa (above, n. 3) (Turnhout, 1998), 190, 200–01, 202. While highlighting the written restrictions upon his authority to negotiate, Liudprand indicates in verses that he had journeyed east 'for love of peace' (*pacis profectus amore*): *Legatio*, 26, 35, 57, pp. 198, 202, 213, line 951. See also R. Macrides, "Dynastic Marriages and Political Kinship", in J. Shepard and S. Franklin (eds.), *Byzantine Diplomacy* (Aldershot, 1992), 273–6; D. Nerlich, *Diplomatische Gesandtschaften zwischen Ost- und Westkaisern 756–1002* (Bern, 1999), 58–9, 128, 299–300; W. Brandes, "Liudprand von Cremona (*Legatio* cap. 39–41)", *BZ* 93 (2000), 437–9.

⁷ Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon*, ed. R. Holtzmann, MGH SS, n.s. 9 (Berlin, 1935), 56. Liudprand's participation in the third embassy was considered likely by K. Leyser, "Ends and Means in Liudprand of Cremona", in J. Howard-Johnston (ed.), *Byzantium and the West c. 850–c. 1200* (Amsterdam, 1988), 120–1. The ancestry of Theophano has been demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt: see G. Wolf, "Wer

West Franks, Hugh Capet, had a letter directed to Basil II and Constantine VIII, requesting a 'daughter of the holy empire' for his only son, Robert, 'himself, too, a king', soon after Robert had been anointed as such in December 987.⁸ Around the same time, at the other end of Europe, Prince Vladimir of Rus was engaged in exchanges that culminated in his marriage to Anna Porphyrogenita and, presumably, his repudiation of Rogneda of Polotsk, earlier described by the Rus *Primary Chronicle* as having been taken to wife by him.⁹ Then, from the mid-990s, Otto III sent a total of three embassies in quest of a bride and, at last, the third embassy returned in the opening months of 1002, bringing a daughter of Constantine VIII Porphyrogenitus.¹⁰ Unfortunately her intended bridegroom had died on January 23 or 24, 1002 and the Porphyrogenita 'went back to her homeland with all her attendants'.¹¹ At the lowlier level of regimes nominally subordinate to the empire, John Orseolo, the son of Doge Peter II of Venice, was married to Maria Argyropoulina, a member of a family well-connected with the court, in 1005–06. This marriage was contracted in response to pressure from the Byzantine emperors. Basil II and his brother are represented as speeding on the 'day of union' by arranging for the patriarch to conduct the wedding in a palace chapel and the two emperors played a prominent role in the wedding festivities. They placed golden crowns over the heads of bride and groom and led them to a hall where for three days they acted as 'fellow banqueters at table', eventually dismissing each guest with gifts.¹²

war Theophanu?", in A. von Euw and P. Schreiner (eds.), *Kaiserin Theophanu. Begegnung des Ostens und Westens um die Wende des ersten Jahrtausends*, II (Cologne, 1991), 385–6; O. Kresten, "Byzantinistische Epilegomena zur Frage: wer war Theophano?", *ibid.*, 403–10; Nerlich, *Gesandtschaften*, 59–60, 302.

⁸ Gerbert d'Aurillac, *Correspondance*, ed. and trans. P. Riché and J.P. Callu, I (Paris, 1993), 268–71.

⁹ The Rus *Primary Chronicle* clearly represents Vladimir as initiating the proposal that he should marry the emperors' sister, although the precise course of events is obscure: *Povest' Vremennykh Let*, ed. V.P. Adrianova-Peretts and D.S. Likhachev (St Petersburg, 1996), 36, 37, 50; S. Franklin and J. Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus 750–1200* (London, 1996), 161–3.

¹⁰ Nerlich, *Gesandtschaften*, 62–3, 303–05.

¹¹ Landulph, *Historia Mediolanensis*, II. 18, ed. A. Cutolo, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, 4.2 (1942), 53; Nerlich, *Gesandtschaften*, 305.

¹² John the Deacon, *Cronaca Veneziana*, in *Cronache Veneziane Antichissime*, ed. G. Monticolo (Rome, 1890), 167–8. Basil's zeal for sealing this knot had much to do with the spiritual bonds with the Orseolos that Henry II had just tightened through sponsoring the confirmation of another of the Doge's sons, who became his namesake:

With the exception of the Venetian match and a bid to marry Basil and Constantine themselves to Bulgarian princesses at a time of crisis in 969,¹³ the initiative for all these matches came from outsiders and this is noteworthy in itself. For the rounds of marriage negotiations between Byzantium and major western leaders in the preceding two centuries give the impression that the first move came from the eastern emperor. One may highlight a few examples with the aid of Daniel Nerlich's full and systematic study. In 765 Constantine V took the initiative in seeking Pippin's daughter, Gisela, as the bride for his son and heir, Leo (IV), and subsequently it was Leo and Empress Irene who sought the hand of Charlemagne's daughter, Rotruda, for their son, Constantine (VI).¹⁴ Something of a pattern emerges in the exchanges between the mid-ninth and the mid-tenth century, the period when Muslim sea-raids loosened Byzantium's hold over the Central Mediterranean, while simultaneously impinging upon Frankish royal dominance even over the southern coastline of Francia. Several attempts were made by the *basileus* to secure by marital bonds a military alliance with a Frankish emperor or, in default of such an emperor, a potentate disposing of significant *force majeure*. The Muslims were the prime target of the intended operations, but there were occasions when a martial northern ally was of use in distracting or overawing Lombard princes ensconced in Salerno and Benevento. Once Sicily ceased to offer a safe base for Byzantine fleets and armed forces, there was need of counterweights against the Lombards. Their further incursions could make a mockery of the emperor's residual claims to dominion in Italy.

It is worth considering east-west exchanges between the mid-ninth and the mid-tenth century in slightly more detail. In 841–2 Theophilos reportedly 'promised' his daughter as bride for the son and heir of Emperor Lothar, Louis II.¹⁵ The rationale of his demarche to the

K. Leyser, "The Tenth Century in Byzantine-Western Relationships", in D. Baker (ed.), *Relations between East and West in the Middle Ages* (Edinburgh, 1973), 31–2. See also J.-F. Vannier, *Familles byzantines. Les Argyroi (IX–XII siècles)*, Byzantina Sorbonensia 1 (Paris, 1975), 43–4.

¹³ See below, n. 54.

¹⁴ Nerlich, *Gesandtschaften*, 37 and n. 107, 257, 259.

¹⁵ *Continuatio Constantinopolitana (ad Chronica Bedana)*, MGH Auctores Antiquissimi 13 (Berlin, 1894–98), 343; Andreas Dandolo, *Venetiarum chronica*, ed. E. Pastorello, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* 12 (1938–58), 151; *Annales Bertiniani*, ed. F. Grat, J. Vieliard, S. Clémencet (Paris, 1964), 42, 68; E. Eickhoff, *Seekrieg und Seepolitik zwischen Islam und Abendland* (Berlin, 1966), 178–9; J. Shepard, "The Rhos guests of

west is sketched in Byzantine chronicles as well as being mooted in his letter to Lothar.¹⁶ The chronicles were composed at least a hundred years later, but they are not the less significant for that: the strategic thinking in imperial circles of the mid-tenth century which they register seems to have been along the same lines as that of Theophilos. The emperor is said to have sought a large army from the 'king' of Francia 'so as to plunder certain of the Saracens' towns and districts between Libya and Asia'. He was aware of the prowess and ample manpower of the Franks in contrast with his own soldiers' 'battle shyness' (*phygomachia*).¹⁷ The Byzantines, for their part, would have been in a position to ferry the warriors, whether in their own bottoms or those of the Venetians. Although not stated explicitly in our sources, expulsion of the Muslims from Sicily was probably Theophilos' principal objective, in conjunction with diversionary raids against their towns in North Africa.¹⁸ The overall effect would have been to redeem his prestige after the Eastern Muslims' sack of Amorion in 838.

A comparable rationale underlay the project for combined operations between a large Byzantine fleet and the armed forces of Louis II, now emperor himself, against the Muslim occupiers of Bari in 868–9. At that time, too, a marriage-tie was proposed by Basil I as a means of reinforcing planned joint action against the Muslims, and the *De administrando imperio*, composed under the aegis of Basil's grandson, Constantine VII, conveys his sense of the complementary nature of the Christian powers' resources.¹⁹ It is, moreover, quite possible

Louis the Pious: whence and wherefore?", *Early Medieval Europe* 4 (1995), 46–7; Nerlich, *Gesandtschaften*, 42–3, 273.

¹⁶ On the letter, see F. Dölger, "Der Pariser Papyrus von St. Denis als ältestes Kreuzzugsdokument", repr. in his *Byzantinische Diplomatie* (Ettal, 1956), 204–14; W. Ohnsorge, "Das Kaiserbündnis von 842–844 gegen die Sarazenen", repr. in his *Abendland und Byzanz* (Darmstadt, 1979), 131–83.

¹⁷ Joseph Genesios, *Regum Libri Quattor*, ed. A. Lesmüller-Werner and H. Thurn, CFHB 14 (Berlin-New York, 1978), 50; Theophanes Continuatus, 135. See also the version in John Skylitzes, apparently derived from Theophanes Continuatus: Skylitzes, 79. The differences between these works' versions were discussed by Shepard, "Rhos guests", 46 n. 16. See also Nerlich, *Gesandtschaften*, 42 n. 132.

¹⁸ Other aspects of the flurry of diplomatic manoeuvres for the defence of Sicily and Crete are discussed in J. Shepard, "Byzantine Relations with the Outside World in the Ninth Century: an Introduction", in L. Brubaker (ed.), *Byzantium in the Ninth Century: Dead or Alive?* (Aldershot, 1998), 167–8, 170–1; E. Manzano Moreno, "Byzantium and al-Andalus in the Ninth Century", *ibid.*, 220–7.

¹⁹ This holds true even though Constantine states that a significant Byzantine army (rather than just ships) was sent to join forces with the Western Christians

that the betrothal of Leo VI's daughter to Louis III of Provence was negotiated with an eye to an active military alliance. Nicholas Mystikos does not indicate who made the first move, but the betrothal anyway bespeaks serious imperial interest in a middling, if well-born, potentate. Leo's plans for his own third marriage (pleading lack of an Augusta as justification, once Anna headed west) may have led him to favour the betrothal, as may regard for Louis' descent from Charlemagne. But hopes that Louis with his southern French power base could contribute to the struggle for Sicily may well have determined Leo's approval. Around the time of the negotiations and betrothal the remaining Byzantine strongholds on the east coast of the island were under heavy pressure and in fact Taormina would fall to the Muslims for the first time in 902. An explicit connexion between the Byzantines' desire for a marriage-tie and need of external assistance to shore up their position in southern Italy is made by Liudprand of Cremona. He ascribes to Romanos I Lekapenos the initiative for the marriage of a daughter of Hugh of Arles, Bertha, to the son of Constantine VII, Romanos, which was celebrated in September 944.²⁰ Liudprand maintains that Lekapenos' marriage proposal betrayed his utter dependence on Hugh for overawing the Lombard master of Capua and Benevento. But as he indicates elsewhere, Lekapenos in the early 940s made a marriage-tie the condition for his despatch of ships equipped with Greek Fire for operations against the Muslim occupiers of Fraxinetum, which lay within Hugh's own dominions.²¹ One may surmise that Lekapenos was looking to further joint operations against Sicilian-based raiders, perhaps even Sicily itself, should the opportunity arise.

The marriage and the person of Bertha, re-named Eudokia upon arrival at Constantinople, received considerable attention in her lifetime as well as upon her untimely death around 949. An ivory most probably emanating from the palace milieu represents her being

and drive the Muslims out of Bari: *DAI*, 29, pp. 126–9. See also *Annales Bertiniani*, ed. Grat et al., 164–5; J. Gay, *L'Italie méridionale et l'empire byzantin* (Paris, 1904), 91–7; Eickhoff, *Seekrieg*, 215–16; Nerlich, *Gesandtschaften*, 45–6, 189–90, 283–4.

²⁰ Liudprand, *Legatio*, 7, ed. Chiesa, p. 190. On the chronology, see O. Kresten and A. E. Müller, *Samtherrschaft, Legitimationsprinzip und kaiserlicher Urkudentitel in Byzanz in der ersten Hälfte des 10. Jahrhunderts*, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch.-historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte 630 (Vienna, 1995), 70–7.

²¹ Liudprand, *Antapodosis*, V. 9, 14, 16–17, 20, ed. Chiesa, pp. 128, 130, 132, 134; Eickhoff, *Seekrieg*, 316–17; Nerlich, *Gesandtschaften*, 190–1.

crowned by Christ together with her husband, Romanos, and the inscription above her head uses her new name and terms her ‘empress of the Romans’ (*basilis Rhomaion*).²² Of course this terminology indicates the extent to which she was assimilated within the ‘Roman’ order, as does the monody composed after her death, praising her for the speed and accomplishment with which she had learnt the Greek language and ‘our customs’.²³ But the same monody extols her origins from among ‘the peoples of Europe, from those notable and celebrated for the splendour of their family and the majesty of their power’ and who rule over the Italian lands.²⁴ It is very doubtful whether any other people would have received such a fulsome accolade in what was most probably a court composition. Similar references to the ‘fame and nobility’ of the Franks and their lands occur in Constantine VII’s *De administrando*.²⁵ This work also acknowledges that imperial marriages were, on occasion, contracted for the sake of ‘some service to the common weal’²⁶ and this calculation underlay the sizeable number of initiatives for marriages taken by the Byzantines towards western dynasts during the period from c. 750 to c. 950. But it is likely that expediency and realism intermingled with more positive sentiments towards the Christian West, at a time when the Bulgars and the Eastern Muslims appeared to be more or less directly threatening the empire. On the one hand, the security of possessions in Italy and the Central Mediterranean region was of less than immediate strategic importance to Byzantium’s rulers and a combat-ready surrogate or partner in the region was correspondingly useful. On the other, a certain sense of fellowship and common faith of ‘the Christians’ facing ‘the common enemies’—as invoked in Theophylus’ letter to Lothar—made the forging of a marriage bond with their leading family more palatable, perhaps even appe-

²² Convincing arguments in favour of identifying the young adults on the ivory as Romanos II and his bride, even though Bertha-Eudokia was still a child at her death, were made by A. Cutler, “The Date and Significance of the Romanos Ivory”, C. Moss and K. Kiefer (eds.), *Byzantine East, Latin West: Art-Historical Studies in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann* (Princeton, 1995), 605–10 and fig. 1, repr. in Cutler’s *Late Antique and Byzantine Ivory Carving* (Aldershot, 1998), no. 11. See also Macrides, “Dynastic Marriages”, 276; Nerlich, *Gesandtschaften*, 80.

²³ S. Lampros, “Ἀνέκδοτος μονωδία Ρωμανοῦ Β’ ἐπὶ τῷ θανάτῳ τῆς πρώτης αὐτοῦ συζύγου Βέρθας”, *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 2 (1878), 271.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 269.

²⁵ *DAI*, 13, pp. 72–3.

²⁶ *DAI*, 13, pp. 74–5.

tizing, to eastern statesmen.²⁷ The representation of Romanos' marriage to Bertha as under Christ's blessing fits into this framework.

Similar enthusiasm for joint operations against 'the African king of the Saracens' was being voiced to Liudprand of Cremona during his stay in Constantinople in 968, and this probably amounted to more than court-inspired rhetoric.²⁸ However, an alteration in the balance of forces and resources was under way around the middle of the tenth century, and it made Byzantine rulers less directly beholden to western potentates for assistance in Italy and the Central Mediterranean. By the same token, Byzantium's renewed military might and potential for further territorial expansion made it prudent as well as appealing for foreign rulers to seek friendship and marriage ties with the imperial house. The renown of the empire rose quite markedly from mid-century onwards and the quantity of more or less full-time military units increased. New tactics and formations suitable for major offensives were tried out and they eventually paid off during the campaigns against Saif ad-Daula. Constantine VII was induced to mount the most elaborate long-range expedition into Northern Syria since the seventh century.²⁹ Even before they had humiliated Saif by sacking his base in Aleppo in 962, the newly expanded armed forces were reassigned to invade Crete. Quite abruptly, strategy switched from one of long-range, spectacular, yet fleeting strikes to one of occupying places other than the longstanding imperial objective of Crete. Texts such as the *Philopatris* proclaim a mood of triumphalism and aggressiveness and voice the hope that the next generation would see 'Babylon destroyed, Egypt enslaved', in other words long-term expansionism.³⁰ These expectations were matched by events.

²⁷ Dölger, "Pariser Papyrus", 207 (reconstituted text); Macrides, "Dynastic Marriages", 268–9.

²⁸ Liudprand, *Legatio*, 40–1, ed. Chiesa, pp. 204–05; J. Shepard, 'Aspects of Byzantine Attitudes and Policy towards the West in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries', in *Byzantium and the West*, ed. Howard-Johnston, 91–2. For the apocalyptic dimension, see Brandes, "Liudprand", 446–9, 451–3.

²⁹ E. McGeer, "The *syntaxis armatorum quadrata*: a tenth-century tactical blueprint", *REB* 50 (1992), 220–9; idem, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth. Byzantine Warfare in the Tenth Century* (Washington, DC, 1995), 198–202, 214–17, 226–9; J. Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society in the Byzantine World, 565–1204* (London, 1999), 115–17, 217–22; K. Shilov, "K voprosu o voennykh reformakh Nikifora II Foki i ikh sotsial'nykh posledstviakh", *IV* 60 (85) (2001), 31–5, 40–1; J. Shepard, "Constantine VII, Caucasian Openings and the Road to Aleppo", in A. Eastmond (ed.), *Eastern Approaches to Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2001), 36–9.

³⁰ *Philopatris*, ed. and trans. M.D. Macleod, in Lucian, *Works*, VIII, Loeb Classical

An attempt to reconquer Sicily was made in 964 and a year or so later Cyprus, another island astride major Mediterranean sea-lanes, was reoccupied. The Sicilian expedition came to grief and, according to Liudprand, the ‘headless corpse’ of one of its commanders was hung up by the Muslims.³¹ Liudprand’s gloating tends to obscure the fact that another invasion of Sicily was envisaged soon afterwards. And Liudprand’s own lord, Otto, did not make much headway in his subsequent attempts to seize the forts and towns of the Byzantines and their sympathizers in Southern Italy. Otto’s forces were most probably the butt of the orator who claimed, around 972, that ‘the haughty race of the Latins has been worn down by war’.³²

The same orator, Anthony the Studite, celebrates the recent subjugation of the Bulgarians and defeat of the ‘Scyths’—steppe-nomads and, in this context, also Rus—and it is likely that reports of these and later victories were sent to other foreign courts, by both spoken and written word. One example is the letter of John Tzimiskes to Ashot III, king of kings of Armenia, in which he claims to have led his troops almost as far as Jerusalem in 975.³³ This was, in the manner of imperial victory bulletins, playing loose with the truth, but it was not sheer fantasy. The Byzantine emperors were now employing tens of thousands of more or less full-time troops for protracted offensives, and the change was not lost on contemporary rulers.

The unusual staying power of Nikephoros’ campaigning in the east was remarked upon by the Byzantines themselves, judging by Liudprand’s mention of a prophecy that Nikephoros would drive all before him throughout his reign.³⁴ According to the prophecy, this would only last seven years: the tide would then turn and the Muslims advance as far as Chalcedon.³⁵ But Liudprand’s insistence that the

Library (London-Cambridge, MA, 1967), 464–5. See also J. Shepard, “Emperors and expansionism: from Rome to Middle Byzantium”, in D. Abulafia and N. Berend (eds.), *Medieval Frontiers: Concepts and Practices* (Aldershot, 2002) 55–82, at 72–3.

³¹ Liudprand, *Legatio*, 43, ed. Chiesa, p. 206; M. Brett, *The Rise of the Fatimids. The World of the Mediterranean and the Middle East in the Tenth Century CE* (Leiden, 2000), 242.

³² Anthony the Studite, *Λόγος ἀναγνωσθεὶς ἐν Βλαχέρναις*, ed. L. Sternbach, *Analecta Avarica, Rozprawy Akademii Umiejętności. Wydział Filologiczny*, 2nd series, vol. 15 (Ogólnego zbioru tom XXX) (Cracow, 1900), 341. On the campaigning, see Gay, *L’Italie méridionale*, 310–18.

³³ See Matt. Ed., 29–33.

³⁴ Liudprand, *Legatio*, 39, ed. Chiesa, p. 204; Brandes, “Liudprand”, 439–43.

³⁵ Liudprand, *Legatio*, 39, ed. Chiesa, p. 204.

Byzantines' armies were notable for quantity rather than quality probably represents a practical attempt to explain away the fact that 'the Greeks are pressing vigorously forward' in the East, while a substantial force has been sent to Italy.³⁶ Liudprand's mode of disparagement departs significantly from the more conventional indictment of Greek trickery and avoidance of pitched battle. His *Relatio* registers, albeit in a derogatory fashion, tactics that were also characterized as novel by a Byzantine source a few years earlier.³⁷ And a poem composed in Ottonian circles in Italy soon after Otto I's death in 973 states that Otto 'feared' *Graecia*, ranking it together with the 'fury of the Hungarians' among the 'savage peoples' whom he had overcome.³⁸ Thus eastern fighting strength is explicitly acknowledged. A reference to Byzantine martial prowess may also be discerned in a letter composed by Gerbert of Aurillac on behalf of Hugh Capet and addressed to Basil II and Constantine VIII. This begins: 'The nobility of your race and also the glory of your great deeds urges and compels us to cherish you; for you appear to be those whose friendship should be valued more than anything else on earth'.³⁹ That the letter's rhetoric highlights military exploits, rather than other qualities of the emperors, is significant. Basil's only major enterprise at the time of writing had ended in disaster—at Trajanopolis in 986—but in highlighting military successes, Gerbert may well divulge something of the rationale of his master and other potentates. The nascent military might of Byzantium made it the more advisable, even 'compelled' them, to seek lasting association in the form of a marriage-alliance. The 'Greeks' were demonstrating unwonted military vigour, thus speaking in familiar terms to the elites of societies in which violence played a habitual, in fact ritual, role.⁴⁰

Hugh Capet's mounting of the West Frankish throne in 987 was merely one in a series of political shifts and formations that characterized the second half of the tenth century. The build-up of

³⁶ Liudprand, *Legatio*, 39, 43–5, 29, ed. Chiesa, pp. 204, 206–07, 199–200.

³⁷ Theoph. Cont., 459–60.

³⁸ MGH, *Poetae Latinae Medii Aevi*, V (1937–79), 633.

³⁹ Gerbert, *Correspondance*, I, ed. Riché and Callu, 268–9.

⁴⁰ K. Leyser, "Early Medieval Warfare", repr. in his *Communications and Power in Medieval Europe, I, The Carolingian and Ottonian Centuries*, ed. T. Reuter (London, 1994), 29–50; G. Halsall, "Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West: an Introductory Survey", G. Halsall (ed.), *Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West* (Woodbridge, 1998), 18–19, 30–4.

Byzantine arms took place against a wider background of change, volatility which in turn affected the empire's own position. Through, above all, martial prowess and evidence of heavenly favour at the battle of Lechfeld, Otto I had established himself as uncontested overlord of the German-speaking peoples and their eastern neighbours. A sense of God-given duty to restore the papal see to its rightful occupant and condition, made him look askance at rival claims to earthly authority in Italy. Liudprand describes him as 'arising from the ends of the earth and coming to Rome', where he 'drove out the ungodly and punished transgressors in accordance with the decrees of Roman emperors such as Justinian, Valentinian, Theodosius and others'.⁴¹ A similarly self-confident note is struck in a letter and a diploma emanating from Otto himself. The latter states that it was issued during operations 'to restore to our Italian realm [Apulia] which had been taken away by the Greeks'.⁴² At about the same time the Rus prince Sviatoslav dismissed Byzantine territorial rights even more sweepingly. He reportedly told Tzimiskes to give up 'Europe', 'which does not rightfully belong to [the Romans]' and withdraw to Asia.⁴³ This display of barbarian 'insolence' may well represent the confection of a Byzantine chronicler, but Sviatoslav was attempting to move the 'centre of [his] land' southwards to the Lower Danube and to dominate the northern Balkans.⁴⁴ Thus Byzantium more or less simultaneously faced forceful challenges to its rights and sphere of influence on two of its main approaches. Within the space of about twenty years, the two bases indispensable for dominion and indirect influence in the west and the north came under assault, and Cherson—unlike Bari in 968—actually succumbed to its besiegers c. 988. Moreover, Otto I, upon being crowned *imperator* in Rome in February 962, adopted the *basileus*' style of representation on his seals. Breaking with his own customary seal designs and those of earlier western emperors, he had himself depicted full-

⁴¹ Liudprand, *Legatio*, 4, ed. Chiesa, p. 189.

⁴² MGH, *Diplomata regum et imp. Germaniae*, I (Hanover 1879–84), no. 368, p. 504; V. von Falkenhausen, *La dominazione bizantina nell'Italia meridionale del IX all'XI secolo* (Bari, 1978), 49; J. Shepard, "Byzantium and the West", in T. Reuter (ed.), *New Cambridge Medieval History*, III (Cambridge, 1999), 613–15.

⁴³ Leo Diac., 105.

⁴⁴ *Povest'*, ed. Adrianova-Peretts and Likhachev, 32–4; Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, 145–50; P. Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier. A Political Study of the Northern Balkans, 900–1204* (Cambridge, 2000), 48–9, 51.

frontal and half-length, wearing a crown topped with a cross and holding a sceptre in his right hand and an orb in his left.⁴⁵ Such an appropriation of the *basileus*' characteristic image before receiving formal recognition of parity from the Bosphorus showed, at the very least, disregard of the easterner's prerogatives.

A certain bravado and willingness to test out their prowess against Byzantine armies may be discerned in the stance of both the German and the Rus leaderships around 970, and it has much to do with the internal history of each of these fast-developing polities.⁴⁶ Scoring points against the Greeks offered leaders a means of bolstering their ascendancy over their own followers and peoples, through loot, glory and demonstrable favour from the heavens. It is quite possible that the much-touted feats of Byzantine arms acted as a stimulus rather than invariably as a deterrent to such ambitious war leaders. This was the case, on both political and ideological counts, with the Fatimids.⁴⁷ In 970–1, their forces laid siege to Antioch for five months, and for several years thereafter their fleet offered them the capability for an attempt on Crete and revocation of Byzantium's gains in the Eastern Mediterranean. Much of the Fatimids' élan in wresting control of Egypt from the Ikhshidids and trying to take over Syria, was due to their championing of 'holy war' against the Greeks; the latter were represented as menacing the whole Muslim world.⁴⁸ It may well have seemed to many in Byzantium's ruling circles that the warnings of a reuniting of enemies by opponents of the projected Cretan expedition in 960 had been vindicated in essence, if not in detail.⁴⁹ Ten years on, Byzantium was challenged by powerful enemies on not two fronts but three. Anthony the Studite's oration evinces a sense of catastrophe narrowly averted by the Virgin's

⁴⁵ W. Messerer, "Zur byzantinischen Frage in der ottonischen Kunst", *BZ* 52 (1959), 41–4; H. Keller, "Ottonische Herrschersiegel. Beobachtungen und Fragen zu Gestalt und Aussage und zur Funktion im historischen Kontext", in K. Krimm and H. John (eds.), *Bild und Geschichte. Studien zur politischen Ikonographie. Festschrift für Hansmartin Schwarzmaier zum fünfundsiebzigsten Geburtstag* (Sigmaringen, 1997), 5–9, 12–15, 27–32, 46–8.

⁴⁶ See, e.g. T. Reuter, *Germany in the Early Middle Ages* (London, 1991), 148–77; G. Althoff, *Die Ottonen. Königsherrschaft ohne Staat* (Stuttgart, 2000), 118–36; Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence*, 139–52.

⁴⁷ P.E. Walker, "The 'Crusade' of John Tzimiskes in the light of new Arabic evidence", *Byzantion* 47 (1977), 306; Brett, *Fatimids*, 308.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 222, 295–6, 308–15.

⁴⁹ Theoph. Cont., 474.

intervention, rather than sheer triumph. The angst and foreboding inherent in the prophesy reported by Liudprand—that the Byzantine victories in the East, would ultimately prove counter-productive and bring the Muslims to the gates of the City—also feature in poems composed by John Geometres in the 970s and 980s. They expressed dismay at the empire's fluctuating fortunes and the spectre of civil war. In this respect, they reprise Anthony's thanksgiving to Mary for pacifying well-equipped rebel armies—'exulting in their size and strength'—which had been as menacing as the external foes.⁵⁰ Geometres wryly noted how much the government depended on barbarians, seemingly on the occasion when Basil II sought a large force from Rus to field against the rebel forces of Bardas Phokas encamped across the Bosphorus: 'now you Thracians [i.e. Byzantines] wish to win the Scyths [i.e. Rus] as allies against your friends'.⁵¹ The sense of the empire's vicissitudes and internal divisions is expressed in another poem attributable to Geometres: 'the East is bleeding with its own blood and the Sword is dividing kinfolk . . . the sons of Hagar prevail!'.⁵² These musings had a basis in politico-military realities. There seems to have been a direct connection between the build-up of an enlarged army and political turbulence. The army was now trained for full-scale offensives, and successive senior commanders of the eastern forces succumbed to the temptation to use their reputations, court access and loyal, battle-hardened troops to mount bids for the throne.⁵³

Thus the regimes of individual emperors were far from unassailable. The expansionism unleashed in the later tenth-century seemed actually to aggravate the empire's longstanding 'two-fronts' problem, opening up opportunities for venturers from Rus. Such vulnerability could make an emperor more amenable to external requests for marriage-ties than the empire's military resources in themselves made

⁵⁰ Anthony the Studite, *Logos*, ed. Sternbach, 341. The rebellion mentioned by Anthony is probably that of Bardas Phokas in 970: J.-C. Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance (963–1210)* (Paris, 1990), 24–5, 213.

⁵¹ J.A. Cramer, *Anecdota Graeca e Codd. Manuscriptis Bibliothecae Regiae Paris.*, IV (Oxford, 1841), 282; A. Poppe, "The political background to the baptism of Rus'", *DOP* 30 (1976), 214–15 and n. 65, repr. in his *The Rise of Christian Russia* (London, 1982), no. 2.

⁵² Cramer, *Anecdota Graeca*, IV, 272; Poppe, "Background", 213–14 and n. 64.

⁵³ Cheynet, *Pouvoir*, pp. 20–1, 24–5, 27–34, 321–33. See also Catherine Holmes' chapter in this volume.

necessary. Basil II sent his sister, Anna, to marry Vladimir of Kiev in exchange for aid against his own military commanders. This princess had been denied to Otto I, but John Tzimiskes' willingness to allow his niece-by-marriage, Theophano Skleraina, to marry Otto's son was presumably prompted by the proximity of Sviatoslav and the Rus in the Balkans and, simultaneously, the prospect of further Fatimid pressure. Some two years earlier Nikephoros II had tried to thwart the Rus drive into the Balkans by proposing the marriage of the boy Porphyrogeniti, Basil and Constantine, to Bulgarian princesses.⁵⁴ Yet for all these vicissitudes, the empire's image of tranquil hegemony was not impaired irreparably. Hugh Capet and Vladimir were showing interest in a marriage-tie around the time that rebel armies were closing on Constantinople and soon afterwards an Armenian monk acclaimed the emperor's control of land and sea and held it to be God's will that the empire stretch 'across the vast surface of the entire earth'.⁵⁵

This is not the place to compare systematically the expectations of such leaders as entered into negotiations for a Byzantine bride or to explore fully the political uses to which resultant brides were put. It is anyway difficult to distinguish sharply between the expectations and preferences of individual rulers and those of members of their elites. Failure to allow for a widespread appetite for *de luxe* goods with eastern connotations can lead to overgenerous assignment of these goods to Theophano's dowry.⁵⁶ We shall focus on how the Byzantine marriage-ties forged by Otto I and Vladimir served to further their pre-existing ambitions, but we shall also consider how far

⁵⁴ Leo Diac., *Historia*, ed. Hase, p. 79; Stephenson, *Balkan Frontier*, 51. According to Stephen of Taron, the Bulgarian leadership sought a Porphyrogenita in the mid-980s, eliciting an imperial embassy: *Histoire universelle*, tr. F. Macler, II (Paris, 1917), 124.

⁵⁵ J.-P. Mahé, "Basile II et Byzance vus par Grigor Narekac'i", *T M* 11 (1991), 562, 563.

⁵⁶ The concentration of 'Byzantine' or 'Byzantinizing' goods and styles dateable to within a generation or so of 1000 found in the German lands inspired H. Wentzel's ingenious hypotheses concerning Theophano's dowry: "Das byzantinische Erbe der ottonischen Kaiser", *Aachener Kunstblätter* 40 (1971), 15–39; *Aachener Kunstblätter* 43 (1972), 11–96; 'Byzantinische Kleinkunstwerke aus dem Umkreis der Kaiserin Theophano', *Aachener Kunstblätter* 44 (1973), 43–86. Caveats are sounded by, for example, H. Westermann-Angerhausen, "Did Theophano leave her mark on the Ottonian sumptuary arts?", in Davids (ed.), *The Empress Theophano*, 244–64; A. Muthesius, "The Role of Byzantine Silks in the Ottonian Empire", repr. in her *Studies in Byzantine and Islamic Silk Weaving* (London, 1995), 201–15.

Theophano and Anna may have played an active role, rather than serving purely as symbols of status. In the west at least, greater familiarity with artefacts, cults and imagery bearing Byzantine traits both provided regimes with new means of expressing pre-existing political aspirations and prompted further experimentation. If, as is likely, this was a time of heightened millennial expectations, new media and imposing forms of access to the heavenly kingdom will have been all the more prized.⁵⁷

One of the most arresting ways in which Byzantine visual expressions of authority could serve Otto I's political agenda has already been noted (above, pp. 12–13). The dies for the seals issued just after his imperial coronation in Rome were probably cut while he was still north of the Alps.⁵⁸ The decision to adopt the *basileus*' manner of depicting himself on his seals and coins seems to have been taken without his sanction and it could well have been deemed an instance of Latin 'haughtiness'. However, the new frontal pose struck by Otto on his seals was probably mainly intended for 'domestic' consumption, that is, to impress upon the disparate groupings under his sway the unique, sacral, quality of his rule. Symbols widely regarded as signifying majesty, linked neither to any one particular region nor to a previous dynasty, could serve this purpose well. Otto's ability to command or attract collaboration from members of his regional nobilities was heavily constrained by their local preoccupations, invocation of customs and expectations of substantial material rewards in return for 'service'. A compelling new image of God-given dominion, crystallized into lasting form on Otto's seals from 965,⁵⁹ might gain the attention and respect of notables who received the missives attached to the seals. This was, after all, a political culture defined by ritual and gesture.⁶⁰ The eastern emperor's image of omnipres-

⁵⁷ On the millennial expectations, see below, n. 75.

⁵⁸ Keller, "Herrschersiegel", 7–9.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 10, 12, 23–5, 49.

⁶⁰ K. Leyser, "Ottonian government", *English Historical Review* 96 (1981), 747–52; idem, "Ritual, Ceremony and Gesture: Ottonian Germany", in his *Communications and Power*, I, ed. Reuter, 192–202; Keller, "Herrschersiegel", 40–6; T. Reuter, "Regemque, quem in Francia pene perdidit, in patria magnifice recepit . . .", G. Althoff and E. Schubert (eds.), *Herrschaftsrepräsentation im ottonischen Sachsen*, Vorträge und Forschungen 46 (Sigmaringen, 1998), 363–80; M. Innes, *State and Society in the Early Middle Ages. The Middle Rhine Valley 400–1000* (Cambridge, 2000), 233–9; D.A. Warner, "Ritual and memory in the Ottonian Reich: the ceremony of *adventus*", *Speculum* 76 (2001), 255–83.

ence, crowned, clasping sacred symbols, and gazing straight at the beholder, would make up for the networks of scribes, agents and enforcers that Otto's Carolingian predecessors had been able to enlist.⁶¹ Otto apparently seized upon the image unilaterally. Nonetheless, a marriage-bond could be expected to animate authority symbols already assumed, facilitate acquisition of ancillary customs and open the door to an influx of eastern luxury goods. If such were the expectations of Otto and his entourage, the arrival of Theophano did not disappoint. She gave a focus to trends already discernible in Ottonian circles and these gained momentum during the reign of her son, Otto III. In fact Theophano seems to have set off a chain reaction in other courts soon after her arrival in the west.

One may take by way of illustration the impact that Theophano's arrival in the west seems to have had on notions of the blessed procreation of reigning couples. Already in the Mainz coronation *ordo* a special relationship is declared between the Virgin, whose immaculate conception brought forth the Son of God, and the queen, whose chastity will, with God's Grace, be rewarded with fecundity. Her offspring will 'govern and protect the glory of the entire realm and the position of the holy Church of God'.⁶² The *ordo* was seemingly compiled on the eve, if not for the occasion, of Otto's coronation in 962. Scions of the ruling house were to be set apart from all other mortals and the special responsibility of the queen in perpetuating it was beginning to be highlighted. But it was the arrival of Theophano that prompted a series of Scriptural and allegorical interpretations of royal coupling. Christ's sanctification of marriage at the wedding of Cana and the Virgin's role as model of purity are themes of the preamble of the sumptuous marriage diploma issued by Otto II in 972 and the Virgin also features in the iconography.

⁶¹ On the emperor's direct gaze and omnipresence, see O. Treitinger, *Die oströmische Kaiser- und Reichsidee* (repr. Darmstadt, 1956), 208–16; Keller, "Herrschersiegel", 8–9, 37–44, 50–1. There are grounds for believing that the main part—including the eight plates—of the extant *Reichskrone* was indeed made for Otto I, while its allusions to eastern imperial imagery are fairly clear: H. Fillitz, "Bemerkungen zu Datierung und Lokalisierung der Reichskrone", *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 56 (1993), 313–34; Westermann-Angerhausen, "Theophano", 255–61; H.C. Evans and W.D. Wixom (eds.), *The Glory of Byzantium* (New York, 1997), 501.

⁶² *Le Pontifical romano-germanique*, ed. C. Vogel and R. Elze, I, StT 226 (Rome, 1963), 267–8; P. Corbet, "Les impératrices ottoniennes et le modèle marial. Autour de l'ivoire du château Sforza de Milan", in D. Iogna-Prat et al. (eds.), *Marie. Le culte de la Vierge dans la société médiévale* (Paris, 1996), 111–12.

There may be hints of an analogy between the progeny of a chaste queen and the Virgin's son.⁶³ The pediment of a North Italian ciborium of, probably, the same date also bespeaks a special relationship between the female members of the ruling family and the Virgin, who may perhaps be on the point of crowning Theophano.⁶⁴ The sense of a sacred bond between the mother of the emperor's son and Mary is still more pronounced on an ivory plaque that was most probably carved in an Ottonian milieu, probably Milan, in the early 980s. At the feet of Christ Pantokrator kneel two crowned adults, in effect performing *proskynesis*. The woman, Theophano, presents to Christ a small boy, also crowned, who seemingly issues forth from her body. The Virgin, standing over mother and son, gestures downwards as if mediating with Christ on their behalf.⁶⁵ A sacred cycle seems implied: the empress has given birth to an only son, as Mary, too, once did.

Byzantine palace ceremonial and acclamations do not seem to have made comparisons between the conception of a Porphyrogenitus and that of Christ or to have drawn parallels between a child-bearing empress and the Mother of God.⁶⁶ It is probable that artists in the Ottonian milieu were elaborating upon rather more general themes of Byzantine art and ideology to their own dynasty's new needs. The Byzantine style of depicting a married couple under Christ's aegis was known to members of the Ottonian entourage and it is replicated closely on the celebrated ivory now in the Musée de Cluny, Paris. Otto II and Theophano are shown receiving crowns

⁶³ Corbet, "Les impératrices", 113–15; MGH *Diplomata regum et imp. Germaniae*, II.1 (Hanover, 1888), no. 21, p. 29 (text); photo in e.g. W. Georgi, "Ottonianum und Heiratskunde 962/972", in von Euw and Schreiner (eds.), *Theophanu*, II, Abb. 2, 3, pp. 136, 137.

⁶⁴ Corbet "Les impératrices", 116–17; fig. 1, p. 120.

⁶⁵ P.E. Schramm and F. Mütterich, *Denkmale der deutschen Könige und Kaiser* (Munich, 1962), no. 75, p. 144; F.-R. Erkens, "Die Frau als Herrscherin", in von Euw and Schreiner (eds.), *Theophanu*, II, Abb. 2, p. 255; Corbet "Les impératrices", 119–21; fig. 3, p. 120.

⁶⁶ This is the case although Mary's protection was invoked in the acclamations celebrating the birth of a Porphyrogenitus and although in the tenth century the nuptial crowning of the emperor came to be held in the 'palace church of the most holy Mother of God of the Pharos': Constantine VII, *Le livre des cérémonies*, 51 (42), 48 (39), ed. and trans. A. Vogt, II (Paris, 1939), pp. 25, 10; Corbet, "Les impératrices", 115. Byzantine ideas concerning conception and birth in the Purple were not tantamount to unqualified exaltation of a *stirps regia*: Dagron, "Nés dans la Pourpre", 130–5.

and—by implication—authority from Christ, as on the forementioned ivory showing Romanos II and Eudokia. But to celebrate the perpetuation of the dynasty through reproduction it was necessary to add specific motifs to Byzantine-derived scenes, as with the physical emergence of the boy-emperor from his mother's body on the ivory now in Milan's Castello Sforza. Theophano probably did not commission the latter or dictate its design, but her arrival in the west seems to have rapidly inspired ideas of a sacred-cum-royal family, much as it provided justification for variations upon the theme of imperial sumptuousness, as on the 'Byzantinizing' marriage diploma itself.⁶⁷ There was a keen appetite among other ruling houses for visual means of expressing a special relationship between chaste yet child-bearing queens and the Virgin, and themes current in Ottonian circles at the time of Theophano's wedding in Rome were seized on and taken further in more distant courts. A Benedictional commissioned by the influential Bishop Aethelwold of Winchester around the time of the crowning of King Edgar drew upon eastern iconographic themes of the Birth and Death of the Virgin to devise novel versions of its own and to concoct new dynastic images. The Virgin, shown being crowned as Queen of Heaven in a most *un*Byzantine way, was taken as a model for Edgar's queen, Aethelfryth. The dual anointing and coronation of the couple in 973 'had its iconographic counterpart in the Benedictional's pairing of the regal investitures of Christ at the Baptism and the Virgin at her Death and Assumption.'⁶⁸ It has been suggested that a fairly recently produced Byzantine Gospel lectionary gave Aethelwold the idea of putting feast pictures of the Virgin's Birth and Death to these uses in a *de luxe* manuscript. He was eager to solemnize his own alliance with Edgar in the cause of monastic reform.⁶⁹ A lectionary could easily have reached Wessex as a gift from the Ottonian court just after Theophano's wedding. It is most likely that the embassy sent by Edgar to Otto I and his son visited them in the autumn of 972, and the envoys reportedly returned with wonderful gifts.⁷⁰ A Gospel lectionary could have been among

⁶⁷ Westermann-Angerhausen, "Theophano", 251–2.

⁶⁸ R. Deshman, *The Benedictional of Aethelwold* (Princeton, 1995), 213. See also *ibid.*, 127–38, 147–8, 204–07, 251–2, 260–1, and P. Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers. The King's Wife in the Early Middle Ages* (repr. London, 1998), 133.

⁶⁹ Deshman, *Benedictional*, 162–4.

⁷⁰ K. Leyser, "The Ottonians and Wessex", English version in his *Communications and Power*, I, ed. Reuter, 95–7.

them. So, although not proven absolutely, the dating of c. 973 proposed for Aethelwold's Benedictional seems all the more likely. Thus the longstanding aspirations of western dynasts and their senior churchmen to solemnize the role of queens as providers of sole legitimate heirs to the throne⁷¹ could gain a liturgical, even theological, uplift with the help of Byzantine motifs. And, if this chronological sequence is valid, the Ottonian court seems to have been swift to project its ruling house's special relationship with the Virgin, while also dispensing eastern *objets d'art* and books to lesser lords.

If a (hypothetical) lone Byzantine lectionary could serve as a catalyst for new expressions of dynastic, quasi-imperial, authority by the *basileus totius Albionis*,⁷² the personal presence of Theophano together with her 'splendid retinue and magnificent gifts'⁷³ might be expected to have been still more of a stimulant in the Ottonian dominions. Their impact went beyond the immediate requirements of the dynasty, provoking further imitation—and improvisation—on the part of notables and the craftsmen who manufactured luxury goods for them.⁷⁴ There was also interaction with a broader band of religious sensibilities. The cult of the Virgin Mary in the last quarter of the tenth century may well have gained vigour and immediacy from widespread anxiety concerning the end of the world.⁷⁵ Christ's Mother had obvious qualifications to act as intercessor at a time of impending Judgement. But it seems to have been Theophano's presence in the west that served as the vector for representations of, and urgent intercession with, the Mother of God. From, apparently, the 970s Mary was increasingly depicted with jewelry and insignia befitting an eastern empress and dedications of monasteries and churches to her increased. Theophano seems to have played a conspicuous part in this development, founding with her husband, for example, a monastery at Memleben dedicated exclusively to Mary. In England as well as the Ottonian lands the cult of the Virgin gained distinctly royal overtones from the 970s onwards, Winchester being its power-house.⁷⁶

⁷¹ Stafford, *Queens, Concubines*, 127–9, 130–3, 137–9.

⁷² Leyser, "Ottonians and Wessex", 97 and n. 123.

⁷³ Thietmar, *Chronicon*, ed. Holtzmann, 56. On the question of Theophano's dowry, see above, n. 56.

⁷⁴ Westermann-Angerhausen, "Theophano", pp. 258–9.

⁷⁵ R. Landes, "The fear of an apocalyptic year 1000: Augustinian historiography, Medieval and Modern", *Speculum* 75 (2000), 118–45. On eastern expectations of the End around 1000 see Brandes, "Liudprand", 455–63; and Magdalino, below.

⁷⁶ A. von Euw, "Der Darmstädter Gero-Codex und die künstlerisch verwandten Reichenauer Prachthandschriften", von Euw and Schreiner (eds.), *Theophanu*, I, 211,

This raises the question as to the activities of, and policies adopted by, Theophano once she was established as *coimperatrix* of Otto II and, upon his death, as *imperatrix augusta*. Otto's early demise and the lengthy minority of their only son provided unforeseen, exceptional opportunities for her. Theophano proved highly effective in forging and retaining close political friendships, aided by her 'natural talent for eloquence' and perhaps also by what a hostile contemporary called 'insolent prattling'.⁷⁷ Like the infant Bertha at the court of Constantine VII, she apparently learnt her host country's language fast and she could probably manage the spoken vernacular as well as the Latin for which an extant Psalter apparently served as a teaching aid.⁷⁸ Theophano's other talents and sheer force of personality have received their due in modern literature and only two facets of her activities in the west will be considered here. Each is well enough known but gains in clarity when viewed in conjunction with the other, and in comparison with the activities in Rus of Theophano's slightly younger contemporary, Anna Porphyrogenita.

Firstly, Theophano seems to have remained mindful of her eastern origins and culturo-religious affinities until her dying day. Otloh of St Emmeram's denunciation of her many extravagant items of costume jewelry and other adornments 'which Greece is accustomed to use' echoed Liudprand's strictures against Byzantine envoys who paraded themselves in long vestments with 'bands and brooches'.⁷⁹ Theophano was herself, wittingly or not, acting as a kind of cultural ambassador for the eastern empire. In naming one daughter after her own mother, Sophia, she was in effect drawing attention to her eastern origins. And she showed conspicuous reverence for individual holy men and founders of orthodox monasteries from the Greek-speaking south of Italy, both during her husband's lifetime and while

215, 219, 224–5, Abb. 20, 21, pp. 216–17; Corbet "Les impératrices", 124–6, 134–5; M. Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, 1990), 270–1, 273.

⁷⁷ *Ingenio facundam: Annales Magdeburgenses*, s.a. 972, MGH SS XVI (Hanover, 1859), 152; *procaci locutione*: Albert of Metz, *Fragmentum de Deoderico primo episcopo Mettensi*, MGH SS, IV (Hanover, 1854), 698.

⁷⁸ K. Leyser, "Theophanu divina gratia imperatrix augusta", in his *Communications and Power*, I, ed. Reuter, 158–9. On the *de luxe* Trier Psalter, written 'in Latin for a Greek reader', see R. McKitterick, "Ottonian Intellectual Culture and the Role of Theophano", in Davids (ed.), *The Empress Theophano*, 181–3.

⁷⁹ Otloh of St Emmeram, *Liber visionum*, MGH SS, XI (Hanover, 1841), 385; Liudprand, *Legatio*, 37, ed. Chiesa, p. 203; K. Ciggaar, "Theophano: an Empress Reconsidered", in Davids (ed.) *The Empress Theophano*, 51, 54.

acting as Regent. Reportedly, Theophano joined 'the men in power' and the families of the Roman elite in going to the deathbed of the Sicilian-born monk, Sabas the Younger, in Rome in December 990, 'prostrating herself before his holy remains'. She was even represented as being sister to the Calabrian monk Gregory in a twelfth-century *Vita*, an apocryphal motif which may, nonetheless, refract an actual meeting between him and the empress in Rome.⁸⁰ Theophano's attachment to cults with eastern leanings was not simply a calculated move to gain sympathizers and respect in the Italian lands. She showed care for the cult of St Pantaleon, whose body had reportedly been brought to the West by one of the negotiators of the marriage pact of 971–2, Archbishop Gero of Cologne. She financed building work at the church in Cologne containing his relics and there, in St Pantoleon's monastery, her body was laid to rest in June 991.⁸¹

Secondly, Theophano seems to have impressed upon her son religious cults and political gestures closely associated with, albeit not unique to, her eastern heritage. Judging by the plaque now in Castello Sforza, Theophano was already regarded as instructing Otto in piety during the first years of his life. The ivory shows her holding up the infant's arms in prayer, teaching him how to adore Christ Pantokrator.⁸² He grew up to be demonstratively devout and while he overtly drew on various mentors, Gerbert of Aurillac and Adalbert of Prague among them, it can scarcely be a coincidence that he maintained his mother's pronounced personal ties with Greek-speaking holy men,⁸³ or her devotion to the Mother of God. He was very probably

⁸⁰ Patriarch Orestes of Jerusalem, *Historia et laudes ss. Sabae et Macarii iuniorum e Sicilia*, 50, ed. I. Cozza-Luzi (Rome, 1893), 67; *Vita s. Gregorii posterior*, I, 14–15; *ASS Novembr.* II.1, pp. 467, 472; V. von Falkenhausen, "Gregor von Burtscheid und das griechische Mönchtum in Kalabrien", *Römische Quartalschrift* 93 (1998), 218–29, 234–5, 237–8, 249.

⁸¹ Nerlich, *Gesandtschaften*, 166; H. Müller, "Die Kölner Erzbischöfe von Bruno I. bis Herimann II. (953–1056)", in *Theophanu*, ed. von Euw and Schreiner, I, 15, 22, 24; I. Bodsch, "Kölner Kirchenpatrone und Heilige bis zur Jahrtausendwende", *ibid.*, I, 118; G. Binding, "Otonische Baukunst in Köln", *ibid.*, I, 283; H. Fussbroich, "Metamorphosen eines Grabes", *ibid.*, II, 231–3.

⁸² Schramm and Mutherich, *Denkmale*, no. 75, p. 144; Erkens, "Frau als Herrscherin", *Abb.* 2, p. 255; Corbet "Les impératrices", p. 122 and fig. 3, p. 120.

⁸³ On Otto's intimacy with other-worldly figures, see H. Seibert, "Herrscher und Mönchtum im spätottonischen Reich", in B. Schneidmüller and S. Weinfurter (eds.), *Otto III.-Heinrich II. Eine Wende?* (Sigmaringen, 1997), 216–20, 229–31, 242–5, 265; H. Mayr-Harting, *Ottonian Book Illumination. An Historical Study*, I (London, 1999), 162–3.

responsible for the selection of a Byzantine ivory depicting the Assumption for the cover of his Gospel Book. The theme of the Virgin's ascent to reign in heaven may have been intended to foreshadow the emperor's own apotheosis; Otto's interest could well bring together Byzantine concepts of the entry of deceased emperors into the kingdom of heaven and widely-felt apprehensions about the millennium.⁸⁴

In 1000 Otto celebrated the festival of the Virgin's Assumption in Rome, commissioning a hymn in her honour. In the middle of the night this was chanted through the City's streets by the 'Greek School' in a procession bearing a much-venerated icon of the Pantokrator. The 'Mother of God' is besought to 'look after the Roman people' and also to protect Otto, who 'offers thee with all his heart whatever he has'.⁸⁵ The Mother of God had long been hymned as special protectress of Constantinople and its resident emperor by the Byzantines,⁸⁶ and Greek-speakers from the south and members of the Roman elite were conversant with Byzantine ways and eastern-style festivals of the Virgin. Otto was, in part, providing for their religious sensibilities. But he also valued public forms of intercession and politically charged spectacle for their own sake. He was, perhaps, writing himself into the script in the role of the Virgin's Son at a time when the world's end loomed. There are indications that, to the north of the Alps as well as in Rome, Otto was being styled and styling himself not merely as intercessor but even, around 1000, as foreshadowing the *rex regnantium* (below, p. 00). Very much his mother's son, he was planning at the time of his own death a monastery outside Cologne, dedicated to Mary and the Saviour. Actual building was carried out by his former *archilogothesa*, Archbishop Heribert, as a memorial to Otto himself. The central plan of the octagonal monastery church clearly evokes eastern or eastern-inspired imperial monuments, and its overall length—almost 30 metres—

⁸⁴ Schramm and Mütherich, *Denkmale*, no. 108, pp. 155–6; Treitinger, *Oström. Kaiser- und Reichsidee*, 156–7; Corbet "Les impératrices", 127–8; Mayr-Harting, *Book Illumination*, pp. 139–59, figs. 85, 92.

⁸⁵ MGH, *Poetae Latinae Medii Aevi*, V (1937–79), 468; W. Berschin, *Griechisch-Latinisches Mittelalter von Hieronymus zu Nikolaus von Kusa* (Bern-Munich, 1980), 224 and n. 27 on p. 239, 116.

⁸⁶ N.H. Baynes, "The Supernatural Defenders of Constantinople", repr. in his *Byzantine Studies and other Essays* (London, 1955), 254–60; A. Cameron, "Images of authority: elites and icons in late sixth-century Byzantium", *Past and Present* 84 (1979), 3–35.

exceeds that of the largest show-church raised in eastern lands around that time.⁸⁷

It is, then, likely that Theophano, together with her choice of the Calabrian monk and 'archimandrite' John Philagathos as godfather and tutor, was of paramount significance in providing the infant Otto with cultural and devotional bearings.⁸⁸ This conclusion gains credibility if Andrzej Poppe's thesis concerning the activities of Anna Porphyrogenita in Rus holds good. There is anyway little doubt as to Anna's role as a 'facilitator', assisting Vladimir by her very presence. The marriage-bond with a 'Greek' princess and her family served to dignify his status and further consolidate his rule over Rus.⁸⁹ Ever since seizing the throne-city of Kiev c. 978 he had been trying to re-impose tribute over the peoples who had slipped out of Kiev's orbit during the upheavals after Sviatoslav's death, and in the 980s he was trying to extend his sway. At the same time he sought to vest his authority in a cult of his own concoction, installing a 'pantheon' of idols besides his residence in Kiev. Sacrifices and victory thanksgivings played a prominent part in its highly public ritual.⁹⁰ The circumstances in which Vladimir opted for Byzantine Christianity and took a Porphyrogenita to wife were fortuitous and the turn of events that prompted them was far from inevitable. But Vladimir's measures fall into place as part of a basic agenda of legitimization on the part of a ruler whose origins were long remembered as having been base. In this context Anna need have featured as little more than a trophy wife, living proof of her husband's new-found kinship

⁸⁷ Binding, "Ottonische Baukunst", 293; H. Müller, "Heribert, Kanzler Ottos III. und Erzbischof von Köln", *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter* 60 (1996), 52–5; H. Müller, "Erzbischof Heribert von Köln und der 'Osten'", in A. Wiczorek and H.-M. Hinz (eds.), *Europas Mitte um 1000*, II (Darmstadt, 2000), 778–9. On the church of the Mother of God in Kiev, see below, p. 25.

⁸⁸ On Philagathos, see e.g. A. Nitschke, "Der misshandelte Papst", in K. Colberg et al. (eds.), *Staat und Gesellschaft in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit. Gedenkschrift für Joachim Leuschner*, (Göttingen, 1983), 40–53; G. Althoff, "Vormundschaft, Erzieher, Lehrer—Einflüsse auf Otto III.", in *Theophanu*, ed. von Euw and Schreiner, II, 284–6; von Falkenhausen, "Gregor", 232–4.

⁸⁹ The exceptional nature of the concession of a Porphyrogenita to Vladimir is made clear by Macrides, "Dynastic Marriages", 270–3. See also F. Kämpfer, "Eine Residenz für Anna Porphyrogenneta", *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 41 (1993), 105–08.

⁹⁰ *Povest'*, ed. Adrianova-Peretts and Likhachev, 36–9, 53; Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence*, 154–60; V.I. Petrukhin, *Drevniaia Rus': narod, kniaz'ia, religiia (Iz istorii russkoi kul'tury, tom 1 (Drevniaia Rus'))* (Moscow, 2000), 259–61.

with the Greek emperors and, quite probably, lending continuity to the palace feasts reportedly held every Sunday, whether or not Vladimir himself was in town.⁹¹ The princely halls in brick and stone were raised by the same 'masters' as built the adjoining church dedicated to the Mother of God—perhaps the feast of her Assumption—and they hailed from Byzantium. The plan and galleries of the 27-metre-long church are apparently reminiscent of the likely layout of the church of Our Lady of the Pharos in the palace complex at Constantinople.⁹² Neither the choice of plan nor the dedication of Kiev's palace church was necessarily due to Anna. She, unlike Theophano, predeceased her husband and she was laid to rest in the church. Her marble sarcophagus, brought from a site such as Cherson, stood prominently in the middle of the church, next to the one that, from 1015, contained Vladimir's remains.⁹³ In death, as in life, Anna Porphyrogenita symbolized kinship and a kind of parity between Vladimir and the rulers of the Greeks.

There are, however, hints that Anna may have been more active than the Rus narrative sources' virtual silence about her would suggest. Yahya of Antioch attributes to her the building of 'many churches in the land of the Rus' and this specification may be of some weight in that Yahya is relatively well-informed as to the conversion of Rus.⁹⁴ Moreover there are Armenian-language graffiti suggestive of the presence of Armenian workmen in Kiev around 1000. An Armenian architect, Trdat, had supervised the partial rebuilding of Constantinople's St Sophia after the earthquake of 989 and it could be that Anna had, through her brothers, personal connexions with Trdat or his compatriots, recruiting them to take part in building works in Rus.⁹⁵ Other evidence suggests that Anna may in fact have had issue

⁹¹ *Povest'*, ed. Adrianova-Peretts and Likhachev, 56; Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence*, 166–7.

⁹² M.K. Karger, *Drevniy K'iev*, II (Moscow-Leningrad, 1961), 36–76, fig. 9 facing p. 36 (plan) A.I. Komech, *Drevnerusskoe zodchestvo kontsa X-nachala XIIvv.* (Moscow, 1987), 26, 170 (plan), 175–6; Kämpfer, "Residenz", 102–3, 107; Petrukhin, *Drevniaia Rus'*, 277.

⁹³ Thietmar, *Chronicon*, ed. Holtzmann, 488; M.K. Karger, "K voprosu o sarkofagakh kn. Vladimira i Anny", *Kratkie Soobshcheniia o dokladakh i polevykh issledovaniiaakh Instituta Istorii Material'noy Kul'tury* 7 (1940), 76–80.

⁹⁴ Yahya, I, 423.

⁹⁵ Stephen of Taron, *Histoire*, trans. Macler, 133; C. Mango, *Byzantine Architecture* (repr. London, 1986), 130. The inference from the graffiti was drawn by N. Marr: see C. Hannick, "Les nouvelles chrétientés du monde Byzantin: Russes, Bulgares

and played a part in her children's education. Andrzej Poppe has marshalled evidence to suggest that at least two boys, Boris-Romanos and Gleb-David, and a girl, Theophano, were born of the marriage: Boris and Theophano received their names in honour of, respectively, their maternal grandfather, Romanos II and their grandmother, Theophano; Anna may have determined to secure the succession for her two sons and managed to have them ceremonially enthroned as Vladimir's co-rulers, with their father's cooperation; for this reason, Boris and Gleb were put to death by Sviatopolk, probably the eldest of Vladimir's sons, just after Vladimir died in 1015; Theophano was spared and later married Ostromir, who became governor of Novgorod; her piety and continuing contacts with Constantinople are suggested by the high quality of the parchment and some of the illuminations in Ostromir's Gospel Book, the earliest dated Rus codex; there may even be circumstantial evidence that Theophano knew and inculcated Greek into her own children.⁹⁶ Some leads in this trail are stronger than others, and a summary fails to do justice to the subtlety as well as the cogency and erudition behind Poppe's reasoning. At all events, his contention that Boris, Gleb and Theophano were Anna's children seems to me to carry conviction.

Three general observations may be made on the strength of Poppe's thesis. Firstly, the naming of children after maternal grandparents seems to have been more current in Byzantine than in Rus ruling circles and presumably Anna had a hand in choosing Romanos and Theophano as baptismal names; she could well have been minded to commemorate their imperial antecedents. Whether she aimed specifically to secure the Kievan throne for Boris and Gleb is less certain, tempting though it is to draw comparisons with Empress Theophano's vindication of Otto III's rights against his adult cousin, Henry the Wrangler, in the 980s. At any rate, Anna would seem to have been equipping the Rus ruling family with Byzantine imperial names, somewhat as Empress Theophano had done in calling one

et Serbes", in J.-M. Mayeur et al. (eds.), *Histoire du christianisme des origines à nos jours*, IV: *Évêques, moines et empereurs (610–1054)*, ed. G. Dagron, P. Riché, A. Vauchez (Paris, 1993), 911–12.

⁹⁶ A. Poppe, "Der Kampf um die Kiever Thronfolge nach dem 15. Juli 1015", *Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte* 50 (1995), 275–96; idem, "Theophana von Novgorod", *Byzantinoslavica* 58 (1997), 131–58; idem, "Feofana novgorodskaia", *Novgorodskiy Istoricheskiy Sbornik* 6 (1997), 102–20; idem, "Losers on earth, winners from heaven", *Mediaeval Studies*, 64, forthcoming.

of her daughters after her own mother Sophia.⁹⁷ And if Boris and Gleb were singled out for more or less immediate elimination by the leading claimant for the Kievan throne in 1015, they presumably did appear to have serious claims to senior status, if not to the throne itself. Yet Gleb-David was then still a youth and assigned to a distant, junior, seat on the Upper Volga, from which Sviatopolk summoned him. It was therefore presumably some rare quality of birth rather than personal capabilities that distinguished him from numerous other siblings.⁹⁸ Such a notion could have been the prestige of having 'Vladimir's empress' for a mother, whether or not children conceived and born in a sacred palace complex were believed to have special blessing from on high.⁹⁹

A second observation concerns the trail of culture and piety that appears to be traceable back from Theophano to Anna Porphyrogenita. The evidence is not wholly conclusive, for Theophano's association with high-quality religious artefacts of Byzantine manufacture is not necessarily imputable to Anna. Even so the indirect evidence of Ostromir's Gospel Book and other Novgorodian church furnishings of the eleventh century calls to mind the concern for church-building ascribed to Anna by Yahya.¹⁰⁰ It could be that Anna was as intent on inculcating godliness and respect for letters into her children as Empress Theophano seems to have been in the west. Poppe noted that Theophano of Novgorod's own son, Vyshata, may have known and spoken Greek and, in that case, he would presumably have owed it ultimately, through Theophano, to Anna.¹⁰¹

Finally, a still more general consideration follows from Poppe's thesis. If Anna was an active patron of church-building and child-bearer, her 'high profile' in Rus and the prospect that her brood of

⁹⁷ Poppe, "Theophana", 148–51; idem, "Feofana", 113–15. On the problem of the succession, see Petrukhin, *Drevniaia Rus'*, 175–7. The name of Empress Theophano's mother, Sophia Phokaina, had some imperial cachet in that her uncle was Nikephoros II Phokas: Kresten, "Byzantinistische Epilegomena", 406–07.

⁹⁸ Gleb's seat was Murom: Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence*, 185, 267–8.

⁹⁹ The death-date of the *tsaritsia Volodimereviaia* is recorded under the year 1011 in the *Povest'*: eds. Adrianova-Peretts and Likhachev, 58. See also above, n. 3.

¹⁰⁰ Poppe, "Theophana", 155–7; idem, "Feofana". 118, 120.

¹⁰¹ Vyshata fled with Prince Rostislav from Novgorod to Greek-speaking Tmutarakan' in 1064 and their choice of refuge could have been due to Vyshata's knowledge of Greek and lingering connexions with Byzantine ruling circles: Poppe, "Feofana", 118.

children of eastern imperial stock might one day occupy the commanding heights of authority there could cast light on Otto III's celebrated foray into 'Sclavinia', when he ceremonially met with the Polish ruler, Boleslaw. There seems to have been deliberate evocation of eastern imperial ways in some of the rites and rhetoric at Gniezno in 1000. In a gesture lacking precedents in western conventions, Otto set his own crown upon Boleslaw's head and declared him to be the 'friend and ally of the Roman people'. The crowning was carried out before Boleslaw's 'warriors' and 'magnates', who were ordered 'as if they were choirs' in ranks differentiated from one another by the colour of their vestments, a form of hierarchy that could well have been inspired by travellers' tales from the Bosphorus.¹⁰² Byzantine-derived court ritual and political imagery were not wholly unfamiliar to members of elites in the Baltic world. In fact crude lead medallions showing Christ's crowning of Otto II and Theophano seem to have been circulating in the region in the late tenth century.¹⁰³ But the ceremonial exchanges between Otto III and the Polish leader would gain a competitive edge if, by 1000, the ties of political kinship between the ruling houses of the Rus and the Greeks showed every sign of remaining lively for a further generation. Otto could have been attempting to stage a ritual demonstration of affinities with Boleslaw in emulation of the mutually honorific partnership crystallizing to their east, drawing on eastern rites of rulership in order to do so. There was no necessary contradiction in his action, given that the Byzantine court possessed hallmarks of the unmistakably imperial. Not long afterwards Otto himself resumed negotiations with Byzantium that would lead to a marriage-agreement involving a Porphyrogenita.

In a sense Byzantium was, around the end of the tenth century, 'making the weather'. Its multi-faceted culture backed up by military might now coupled 'imperial philosophy' with 'Roman power

¹⁰² Gallus Anonymus, *Chronicae et gesta ducum sive principum Polonorum*, ed. K. Maleczynski (Cracow, 1952), 18–19; G. Althoff, *Otto III*. (Darmstadt, 1996), 143–6; T. Wasilewski, "Couronnement de l'an 1000 à Gniezno et son modèle byzantin", in T. Manteuffel and A. Gieysztor (eds.), *L'Europe aux IX^e–XI^e siècles* (Warsaw, 1968), pp. 461–72; J. Shepard, "Otto III, Boleslaw Chrobry and the 'happening' at Gniezno, A.D. 1000", G. Prinzing, M. Salamon and P. Stephenson (eds.), *Byzantium and East Central Europe* (Cracow, 2001), 41–6.

¹⁰³ Schramm and Mutherich, *Denkmale*, no. 74, p. 144; N. Gussone, "Trauung und Krönung", von Euw and Schreiner (eds.), *Theophanu*, II, Abb. 3, p. 168.

(*potentia*)', in Gerbert's covetous words.¹⁰⁴ Aspiring potentates were impelled simultaneously to emulate and improvise upon its symbols and rites of authority, and to seek political kinship with the eastern ruling house. This 'weather' was, admittedly, transient, for the concatenation of elements inducing it inevitably passed. As it happened, neither Theophano nor Anna proved ultimately successful with their chief biological assignment, production of a long-lasting line of male descendants. And, we have emphasized, Byzantine-derived or -inspired symbols of authority were expected to serve other rulers' agenda. In an era of experimentation their adaptations could be extravagant or veer abruptly against the eastern empire's prerogatives. One 'meteorological' peculiarity, charging the atmosphere in the generations around the year 1000, was widespread expectation of the world's ending, aroused by the millennia of Christ's birth and death.¹⁰⁵ It may be no accident that Otto III, arch-exponent of Byzantine-inspired political imagery and rites of intercession with the Mother of God, was so preoccupied with preparing his own soul for the world to come.¹⁰⁶

Otto's flamboyant Christomimesis developed out of Byzantine imagery held out the promise of spiritual salvation for himself and his subjects, even while offering a longer-term programme of godliness, 'wisdom' and conversion work among the peoples to the east of his dominions. This *prima facie* contradictory stance is enshrined in the famous illumination of the Gospel Book presented to Otto by the monk Liuthar. Otto sits enthroned, Christ-like in a mandorla, surrounded by symbols of the Four Evangelists and crowned by the Hand of God.¹⁰⁷ His gestures, right hand holding a cross-topped orb, are redolent of the east, in so far as a general sense of the emperor as intermediary between God and man pervades Byzantine ideology. But the literal manner in which Otto's Christ-like qualities are represented, head and shoulders in the clearly demarcated heavenly

¹⁰⁴ *Lettres de Gerbert (983–987)*, ed J. Havet (Paris, 1889), 237.

¹⁰⁵ Landes, "Apocalyptic year", 118–30.

¹⁰⁶ Seibert, "Herrscher und Mönchtum", 242–5; Mayr-Harting, *Ottoman Book Illumination*, I, 164–8.

¹⁰⁷ Schramm and Mutherich, *Denkmale*, no. 103, p. 154; Mayr-Harting, *Ottoman Book Illumination*, I, fig. 29, p. 59 (photo), pp. 60–8; W.C. Schneider, "Imperator Augustus and Christomimesis. Das Selbstbild Ottos III. in der Buchmalerei", A. Wiczorek and H.-M. Hinz (eds.), *Europas Mitte um 1000*, II (Darmstadt, 2000), 802–03, 806; *ibid.*, *Katalog*, 504 (photo).

zone and arms outstretched in the form of the Cross, lacks an exact counterpart in work known to have emanated from the eastern court. This illumination composed in Otto's circle of associates suggests how visual statements of God-given majesty could be applied to novel situations north of the Alps. It has been argued that the two kings bowing their heads before the enthroned Otto represent specific individuals, the Hungarian and Polish rulers, Stephen and Boleslaw, each holding a lance which Otto actually handed or sent to them.¹⁰⁸ This thesis rests partly on a dating of the Liuthar Gospel Book that is still controversial.¹⁰⁹ But in any case the illumination is in key with the rites enacted at Gniezno in 1000. There Otto broke new ground when he set his own crown on Boleslaw's head, presented him with a holy lance containing a nail from the True Cross and declared him 'brother and partner of the empire'.¹¹⁰ As noted above, the evocation of eastern imperial manners could well have been carried out with a competitive eye to the political kinship between Vladimir and the Byzantine *basileus*. And by dramatizing his 'apostolic' role and venerating the relics of his former mentor, Adalbert, as a 'martyr for Christ', Otto was laying claim to be at least as strenuous an evangelizer as his eastern counterparts. But, as with the Christomimesis portrayed in Liuthar's Gospel Book, Otto might also have been signalling a further, transcendental, role when he placed his crown on Boleslaw's head. If he were playing the part of *rex regnantium*, this act of political theatre could have prefigured the imminent end of all things and the Second Coming. Such free play with eastern symbolism of ranking order and with Christomimesis would not be surprising, in light of Otto's upbringing and contemporaries' expectations towards the millennium.¹¹¹ It had, after all, required no direct prompting from Byzantium for grandiose analogies between the queen of

¹⁰⁸ J. Fried, *Otto III. und Boleslaw Chrobry. Das Widmungsbild des Aachener Evangeliars, der "Akt von Gnesen" und das frühe polnische und ungarische Königtum*. (Stuttgart, 2001), 39–57, 124–44, 167–9, 178–9.

¹⁰⁹ I. Kuder, "Die Ottonen in der ottonischen Buchmalerei", in G. Althoff and E. Schubert (eds.), *Herrschaftsrepräsentation im ottonischen Sachsen* (Vorträge und Forschungen 46) (Sigmaringen, 1998), 162–90; Schneider, 'Imperator Augustus', 802–03.

¹¹⁰ Gallus Anonymus, *Chronicae*, ed. Maleczynski, 19; Shepard, "Otto III, Boleslaw Chrobry", 42–5.

¹¹¹ Landes, "Apocalyptic year", 99–100, 118–23, 128–30, 141–5; Mayr-Harting, *Ottonian Book Illumination*, II, 15, 18–20, 31–53.

Wessex and the Queen of Heaven to gain visual expression and elaboration.

Byzantium's contribution to these aspects of Ottonian political culture was largely passive. But in Italy the empire's new-found standing and *potentia* offered an alternative pole of attraction to miscellaneous elites and individuals and this, in turn, made *amicitia et pax* between the western imperial masters of Rome and the *basileus* all the more desirable and hard to attain. The protean, often convoluted, nature of 'east-west' relations is reflected in the vicissitudes of John Philagathos. His, most probably, is the figure shown performing *proskynesis* beneath Otto II's feet on the Musée de Cluny ivory. He is generally believed to have commissioned the ivory, and thus upheld its designation of Otto as *imperator Romanorum*, a serious infringement upon Byzantium's claim exclusively to represent the Roman empire. Yet in 997, upon returning from an embassy to the Bosphorus on behalf of Otto III, Philagathos was installed as anti-pope in lieu of Otto's cousin and nominee for the holy see, Gregory V.¹¹² His most active support came from leading families in Rome, notably the Crescentii, and to all appearances Byzantine diplomacy was not directly responsible for the expulsion of Gregory. Even so, it was probably expectations of sympathy from Byzantium that emboldened the Crescentii to make their move with Philagathos. In making constant use of the title *Romanorum imperator augustus* on his official documents from December 996 onwards Otto may have been responding primarily to the challenge posed by lay and clerical grandees of the Roman elite, emphasizing his rights over their city.¹¹³ This 'Roman' title in effect blocked off their rights of allegiance or appeal to the eastern 'Roman' emperor. But whether or not primarily a defensive move, it impinged upon Byzantine ideology. And this, in turn, could well have encouraged Otto to persevere with embassies seeking a Porphyrogenita and thereby agreed parity of status with the *basileus*.

The *basileus*' capacity to intervene in Italy's affairs mounted towards the end of the second decade of the eleventh century, after he gained the initiative over the Bulgarians. So indignant was Henry II at the consolidation of Byzantine power and entry of magnates such as

¹¹² Althoff, *Otto III.*, 86–7; von Falkenhausen, "Gregor", 232–3.

¹¹³ Keller, "Herrschersiegel", 17–20, 49.

Pandulf IV of Capua into its orbit that he personally led an expedition to the south. In 1022 he attempted to demolish a symbol of authority restored from the east, Troia (i.e. 'Troy'), a large new-built fortified town dominating the route from Apulia to Benevento.¹¹⁴ Henry's incursion was of fleeting effect and a few years later Basil II was able to marshal an expedition to reconquer Sicily without having recourse to any major western ruler. There seems, in 1025, to have been little if any sense of the need for 'western armies' or a western 'lion cub' to join forces against the Saracen 'jack-ass'.¹¹⁵ Byzantine rulers apparently now considered themselves self-sufficient. But that lasting peace with the *basileus* could best be attained through a marriage-tie seems to have been the view of Henry II's successor, Conrad II. Soon after his imperial coronation in Rome in 1027 he despatched a mission to Constantinople, seeking a 'daughter of the king (*rex*)' for his young son and heir, Henry.¹¹⁶ For Conrad as for the Ottos, it was a matter of accommodating, if not curbing, Byzantine power in the peninsula. Shortly before sending off the embassy, he licensed Normans already in the south to stay there and defend 'the borders of the realm against the stratagems of the Greeks'.¹¹⁷ Whether Conrad would have combined a Byzantine marriage tie with self-designation as 'emperor of the Romans', on the lines of Otto III in 1001–02, cannot be determined. No youthful Porphyrogenita was available, nor was a match agreed with a possible bride from the family of Zoe's new husband, Romanos Argyros.¹¹⁸ But that Porphyrogenitae were sought by, or on behalf of, three generations of German-born imperial suitors spanning the year 1000 is suggestive

¹¹⁴ J.-M. Martin and G. Noyé, "Les villes de l'Italie byzantine (IX^e–XI^e siècle)", in V. Kravari, J. Lefort and C. Morrisson (eds.), *Hommes et richesses dans l'Empire byzantin, II, VIII^e–XV^e siècle* (Paris, 1991), 36, 40–1, 44–6, 48–9 and fig. 7 (plan); J.-M. Martin, *La Pouille du VI^e au XII^e siècle*, Collection de l'École française de Rome 179 (Rome, 1993), 259–63; S. Weinfurter, *Heinrich II.* (Darmstadt, 2000), 245–9.

¹¹⁵ Dölger, "Pariser Papyrus", 206; Liudprand, *Legatio*, 40, ed. Chiesa, p. 204. above, pp. 6, 9.

¹¹⁶ Wipo, *Gesta Chuonradi II. Imperatoris*, 22, in Wipo, *Opera*, ed. H. Bresslau, MGH SS in usum schol. (Hanover-Leipzig, 1915), 41; Berthold, *Narratio*, MGH SS, XV.2 (Hanover, 1888), 769; H. Wolfram, "Die Gesandtschaft Konrads II. nach Konstantinopel (1027/29)", *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 100 (1992), 162, 166–7.

¹¹⁷ Wipo, *Gesta*, 17, ed. Bresslau, 37.

¹¹⁸ During the embassy's stay in Constantinople Zoe married Romanos, and they became co-rulers upon the death of Constantine VIII: Wolfram, "Gesandtschaft Konrads", 166–9.

in itself. To thrusting new regimes, the eastern empire appeared not so much an anomalous ruin in the Italian landscape as a resurgent force, capable of gaining fresh devotees and implanting strongholds in all manner of ways. Besides, when Conrad made his bid for a Porphyrogenita, the millennium of Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection still lay ahead.

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POLITICAL ELITES IN THE REIGN OF BASIL II

Catherine Holmes

Introduction

Historians usually divide the long reign of Basil II into two uneven chronological segments. The first thirteen years are typified as a period of endemic insurrection fomented by the great magnate families of the Anatolian plateau; the next thirty-six years as a much more glorious phase of successful military campaigns and territorial acquisitions. The turning point in the reign is frequently dated to 989, the year when one leading rebel, Bardas Phokas was defeated and killed in battle, and another, Bardas Skleros, was forced to surrender. It is widely believed that these victories enabled Basil to emasculate the empire's land-owning aristocracy and to develop a highly centralised state focused on the emperor's own person.¹ This interpretation of Basil's reign frequently carries within it the suggestion that political society changed radically in the decade before the first millennium. Before 989 Byzantium was an increasingly centrifugal polity dominated by a small number of powerful families with large estates in Asia Minor, who used their tenure of public office and possession of private resources to challenge the position of the emperor. With the strengthening of imperial authority after 989, the great families disappeared, and power was delegated within a more centripetal system to court functionaries and families with less significant landed positions.²

¹ G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (trans. J. Hussey), 3rd ed. (Oxford, 1968); W. Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* (Stanford, CA, 1997), 513–33; M. Whittow, *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium* (Oxford, 1996).

² Recently Jean-Claude Cheynet has offered a slightly different rendering of the internal governance of Basil's reign. Using extensive prosopographical research, he argues that during Basil's reign members of the political elite ceased to hold public office in regions where they were also estate owners, and instead exercised official command in areas where they had no landed interest. This bifurcation of the geographical location of private resources and public authority meant that Constantinople became the political fulcrum of empire, with the Byzantine aristocracy choosing to be absentee landowners and relocating their households to the capital. However,

Two medieval texts have been particularly important in shaping modern interpretations of the transformation of political society during Basil's reign. The first is Michael Psellos' well-known analysis of the reign in the *Chronographia*, which appears to argue that after the defeat of Skleros and Phokas, Basil crushed the greater families of the empire, took civil and military affairs into his own hands, and appointed a series of less significant figures, 'neither brilliant in intellect, nor remarkable in lineage, nor excessively trained in public speaking' as his subordinates.³ The second is a Novel promulgated by the emperor in 996, which strengthened existing legislation prohibiting the 'powerful' (*dynatoi*) from seizing the lands of their poorer neighbours.⁴ This Novel required that all property acquired by the 'powerful' from within free peasant *choria* since 927 should be restored to its former owners without compensation for either the original purchase price or for subsequent improvements. It also abolished the principle that property ownership was immune from judicial inquiry after forty years. Historians have, of course, disagreed violently about how the series of 'poor' versus the 'powerful' Novels from the tenth century, of which the 996 version is merely the last, relates to the nature and exercise of power in medieval Byzantium. For some the legislation refracts a bitter struggle between the Macedonian imperial dynasty and a 'powerful' class of aggressive land-based magnates

for Cheynet the essential moment of change in the reign remains the defeat of Skleros and Phokas: Cheynet, *Pouvoir*, 303–9, 333–6; see also J.-C. Cheynet in this volume pp. 1–2; M. Angold (ed.), *The Byzantine Aristocracy, IX–XIII Centuries*, BAR International Series 221 (Oxford, 1984), 3. It is striking that Cheynet's vision of an increasingly centralised Byzantium represents an updated version of arguments first presented by Ahrweiler and Oikonomides some twenty-five years ago on the basis of research into administrative documents: H. Ahrweiler, "Recherches sur la société byzantine au XI^e siècle: nouvelles hiérarchies et nouvelles solidarités", *TM* 6 (1976), 99–124; and in the same volume, N. Oikonomides, "L'évolution de l'organisation administrative de l'empire byzantin au XI^e siècle", 125–52.

³ Psellos, I, 1–24. There is also a more recent edition of the *Chronographia* with an Italian translation, *Michele Psello Imperatori di Bisanzio (Cronografia)*, ed. S. Impelizzeri, trans. S. Ronchey, 2 vols. (Rome, 1984). However, since most historians continue to cite the Renauld rather than the Impelizzeri edition, I have chosen to use Renauld for all references in this paper.

⁴ *Ius Graecoromanum*, ed. I. and P. Zepos, 8 vols. (Athens, 1931), I, 260–72. The roots of this legislation lay in Romanos Lekapenos' decision in 934 to prevent the 'powerful' from acquiring properties from the 'poor' at prices significantly below market value after the Byzantine countryside had been devastated by a series of natural disasters (*ibid.*, 205–14). His legislation was reissued and refined by his successors, Constantine Porphyrogenitus (*ibid.*, 215, 242) and Nikephoros Phokas (*ibid.*, 254).

for the manpower and territorial resources of the state.⁵ For others the legislation is less about competing power structures, and more about an imperial imperative to prevent the erosion of the fisc.⁶ Yet, however historians choose to interpret the legislative corpus of the tenth century, most agree that Basil II himself deployed the 996 Novel as a way of crushing the greater families that had rebelled against him in the first thirteen years of his reign.⁷

In this paper I will examine to what extent Basil's reign should be interpreted as a watershed period for Byzantium's political elite and its internal governance. However, rather than simply trawling through contemporary source material in search of data to support or refute existing interpretations, I will try to open up the domestic history of the reign by setting the contemporary evidence within a series of broad chronological, geographical and literary contexts. I will argue that the first crucial step in assessing any aspect of Basil's reign involves describing clearly the contours of an exceptionally peculiar narrative historical record. Next I will suggest that the reign can only be understood in the context of deep-seated changes to the economy and society of Byzantium in the tenth century. The paper will then move on to investigate the revolts of Bardas Skleros and Phokas. The unusual quantity of evidence relating to these rebellions makes this period a particularly good test case for uncovering the roots of political authority in tenth-century Byzantium. This case study will stress that power was vested in public office, in particular service within the army, rather than private wealth. It will suggest that political tensions more frequently arose over the trajectory of 'foreign' policy rather than the control of the state's fiscal resources. As such, this study will conclude that if there was a key period of change in Basil's reign, this should be dated to 1000 and the truce with the Fatimids of Egypt, rather than 989 and the defeat of Skleros

⁵ Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 305–7; idem, "Agrarian Conditions in the Byzantine Empire in the Middle Ages", in M. Postan (ed.), *Cambridge Economic History of Europe, The Agrarian Life of the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed., 8 vols (Cambridge, 1941–89), I, 216–21.

⁶ P. Lemerle, *The Agrarian History of Byzantium from the Origins to the Twelfth Century: the Sources and Problems* (Galway, 1979), 85–115; M. Kaplan, *Les hommes et la terre à Byzance du VI^e au XI^e siècle* (Paris, 1992), 414–43.

⁷ Kaplan, *Les hommes*, 437–9; C.S. Sifonas, "Basile II et l'aristocratie byzantine", *Byzantion* 64 (1994), 118–33; R. Morris, "The Poor and the Powerful in Tenth-Century Byzantium: Law and Reality", *Past and Present* 73 (1976), 3–27.

and Phokas. Armed with a new understanding of the nature of political authority in Basil's Byzantium, the paper will then re-examine those sources which have dominated discussion of the reign for so long: the Novel of 996 and the account of Michael Psellos, and offer a new reading for both. The paper will consider finally how this re-reading of the early years of Basil's reign affects our understanding of the period after 1000. Above all, it will ask how the Phokas-Xiphias rebellion of 1021–2 should be interpreted in the light of a revised understanding of the nature of political authority in the later tenth and early eleventh centuries.

Texts and contexts

Let us look first at the medieval historical record of Basil's reign. Here the most important point to note is that despite the length of the reign itself and the scale of the empire's territorial aggrandisement under Basil's tutelage, this period is sparsely covered by historians writing in Greek. Although Michael Psellos indicates that historians were at work during the reign itself, the only extant contemporary account is that of Leo the Deacon. However Leo's testimony, written in the mid-990s, terminates with the defeat of Phokas in 989.⁸ The earliest extant account of the whole reign is Michael Psellos's short appraisal in the *Chronographia* composed in the second half of the eleventh century. However, while this assessment has exercised considerable influence in shaping interpretations of the emperor's personality and the nature of his government, Psellos's is not a connected narrative of the entire reign.⁹ Instead, the first surviving narrative account is that of John Skylitzes composed in the later eleventh

⁸ Leo Diac., 169–76. For references to other historians active during Basil's reign, see Psellos, I, 4. The exact date when Leo wrote his history is not known. However, it is likely that he was writing after 995. Leo himself mentions that repairs to Hagia Sophia damaged in an earthquake took six years to complete. According to both Leo and Yahya ibn Sa'id this earthquake happened in 989 (Leo Diac., 175–6; Yahya, II, 429). The belief that Leo wrote some three years earlier, *c.* 992, is based on John Skylitzes's erroneous dating of the 989 earthquake to 986 (Skylitzes, 331–2).

⁹ Psellos, I, 1–24. Psellos's treatment of Basil's reign has, however, attracted interest recently among historians. See, for example, B. Crostini, "The Emperor Basil II's Cultural Life", *Byzantion* 64 (1996), 53–80; L. Garland, "Basil II as Humorist", *Byzantion* 67 (1999), 321–43, and most recently, A. Kaldellis, *The Argument of Psellos's Chronographia* (Leiden, 1999), 26–31, 42–51, 84–7, 166, 184.

century as part of a much longer historical synopsis.¹⁰ Yet, even Skylitzes' treatment is less than comprehensive. The first half of his testimony is dominated by the revolts of Skleros and Phokas, the second by Basil's campaigns in Bulgaria. Skylitzes has relatively little to say about events in Constantinople, the eastern frontier, or relations with neighbouring states to the north and west. In addition, his account contains many chronological confusions.¹¹ Nor are his geographical lacunae or chronological difficulties eased by subsequent historians writing in Greek. From John Zonaras onwards, most accounts represent a paraphrase or a fusion of the pre-existing testimonies of Skylitzes and Psellos.¹²

To some extent historians writing in languages other than Greek can clarify the chronological outlines of the reign. Of particular significance are the contemporary histories of Yahya ibn Sa'id and Stephen of Taron. Yahya was an Arab Melkite doctor who migrated to Antioch from Cairo during the second half of Basil's reign, a period when members of the Egyptian Christian administrative elite were persecuted by the Fatimid caliph al-Hakim. The extant version of Yahya's chronicle begins in the reign of Romanos Lekapenos and ends with Romanos III. His historical writings not only display great chronological, patronymical and toponymical accuracy, but also great geographical range, embracing states across the medieval Near and Middle East including Byzantium itself. Moreover, Yahya's migration to Antioch allowed him to consult a variety of histories written in Greek which are no longer extant but which reflect on the internal history of Byzantium. His use of local chronicle and hagiographical materials provides a unique view of events in Antioch during the later tenth and early eleventh centuries.¹³ While the world chronicle of the Armenian historian Stephen of Taron is less finely honed than Yahya's testimony, it also contains an invaluable fusion

¹⁰ Skylitzes, 314–69. Skylitzes' text covers the period 811–1057. A continuation, probably written by Skylitzes, takes the account to 1079.

¹¹ See also the comments of Jean-Claude Cheynet in this volume pp. 2, 27.

¹² *Ioannis Zonarae Epitomae Historiarum Libri XIII–XVIII*, III, ed. T. Büttner-Wobst, CSHB (Bonn, 1897), 538–69.

¹³ Yahya, I–III, cover the periods 937–69, 969–1013, and 1013–1034 respectively. See also a recent Italian translation: *Yahya al-Antaki Cronache dell'Egitto Fatimide e dell'Impero Bizantino 937–1033*, trans. B. Pirone (Bari, 1998). For further discussion of Yahya's sources and working methods see J.H. Forsyth, "The Chronicle of Yahya ibn Sa'id al-Antaki" (Ph.D. diss., Michigan University, 1977).

of materials. Although its principal concern is with the domestic histories of various Armenian and Georgian princedoms, Stephen pays close attention to the internal history of Byzantium and to the fates of those individuals from Caucasia who entered imperial service during Basil's reign.¹⁴ Moreover, although the extant version of Stephen's chronicle ends in 1004, a longer redaction of his writings was available to the later eleventh-century Armenian historian Aristakes of Lastivert.¹⁵ Apart from Yahya, Stephen, and Aristakes, several other historians shed light on the eastern half of the Byzantine empire in Basil's reign. Some are near contemporaries: Ibn Miskawayh at work in Buyid Baghdad; Elias of Nisibis; and various Georgian historians and hagiographers.¹⁶ However, several historians writing in later centuries including Matthew of Edessa, the continuator of Thomas Artsruni, Michael the Syrian, Bar Hebraeus, and Abu Shudja al-Rudhrawari, include some significant materials from the later tenth and early eleventh centuries.¹⁷

Yet, while the eastern sources can add chronological backbone and illuminate the Byzantine east, it is striking that when they are aggregated with the Greek sources, large chronological and regional gaps are still conspicuous. Thus, while many of the sources, both Greek and non-Greek, are liberal in their coverage of the Skleros and Phokas revolts, their treatment of events after 989 is much

¹⁴ *Des Stephanos von Taron armenische Geschichte*, trans. H. Gelzer and A. Burckhardt (Leipzig, 1907), 137–217.

¹⁵ Aristakes of Lastivert, *Récit des malheurs de la nation arménienne*, trans. M. Canard and H. Berbérien according to the edition and Russian translation by K. Yuzbashian (Brussels, 1973), 2–26.

¹⁶ Ibn Miskawayh: *Eclipse of the Abbasid Caliphate*, ed. and trans. H. Amedroz and D. Margoliouth, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1920–1), V, 424–5, 436–9; Elias: *La chronographie de Mar Elie bar Sinaya, Métropolitain de Nisibe*, ed. and trans. L.J. Delaporte (Paris, 1910), 134–142. The *Life of John and Euthymios*, composed c. 1040, is perhaps the most valuable of the Georgian materials for the internal history of Basil's reign: B. Martin-Hisard, "La Vie de Jean et Euthyme: le statut du monastère des Ibères sur l'Athos", *REB* 49 (1991), 67–142. See also R. Thomson, *Rewriting Caucasian History: The Georgian Chronicles* (Oxford, 1996), 274–285 and S.H. Rapp, "Imagining History at the Crossroads: Persia, Byzantium and the Architects of the Written Georgian Past" (Ph.D. diss., Michigan University, 1997), 492–3.

¹⁷ Matt. Ed., 34–50; Artsruni: *History of the House of the Artsrunik*, trans. R.W. Thomson (Detroit, 1985), 368–71; Mich. Syr., 132–146; E.A. Wallis Budge, ed. and trans., *The Chronography of Gregory Abu'l Faraj, the Son of Aaron, the Hebrew Physician, Commonly Known as Bar Hebraeus* (London, 1932), 175–189; Al-Rudhrawari: *Eclipse of the Abbasid Caliphate*, ed. and trans. H. Amedroz and D. Margoliouth, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1920–1), 6: 6–7, 23–35, 115–119.

thinner. During the decade following the civil wars, the Armenian and Arabic records dwell primarily on relations with Fatimid Egypt, Aleppo and the Georgian principedom of Tao, while Skylitzes offers sporadic and confused coverage of warfare with the Bulgarians. Between the early 1000s and 1014 there is almost complete silence about Asia Minor, the east, the Balkans and Constantinople itself. Further west, a few dated references can be extracted from the brief testimonies of chroniclers writing in Latin, such as Lupus Protospatharios, and from local charters. Nonetheless, such material refers predominantly to Byzantine Italy rather than the empire's heartland.¹⁸ The historiographical gloom only begins to lift after 1014, with some eastern snapshots from Yahya, and Skylitzes' analysis of the warfare which preceded the annexation of Bulgaria. However, it is only at the very end of the reign that coverage becomes more sustained. Many of the narrative sources comment on the absorption of the southern Armenian principality of Vaspurakan (1019–21), Basil's campaigns against the Iberians (Georgians) in 1021/2, and the contemporaneous revolt against imperial authority in central Anatolia led by Nikephoros Phokas and Nikephoros Xiphias.

Apart from neglecting long chronological periods and substantial geographical areas of Basil's reign, another problem presented by the surviving historical narratives, whether in Greek or other languages, is that most were written long after the emperor died. This is a problem that should not be under-estimated, for not only does late composition lead to inaccuracy of fact, it can also lead to distortion of interpretation, as the rewriting of history is reshaped according to later political, social and cultural preoccupations. In the context of an analysis of political elites in Byzantium, it is worth noting how far John Skylitzes' testimony of Basil's reign reflects more the political complexion of the empire in the later eleventh century, the period he was writing in, and less the political realities of the later tenth century, the period he was writing about. Even the most cursory reading of Skylitzes' appraisal leaves the reader struck by the extensive coverage the author affords to the Skleros revolt and the lack of information he provides about the Phokas rebellion. This

¹⁸ Lupus Protospatharius, MGH SS V, 55–7; V. von Falkenhausen, *Untersuchungen über die byzantinische Herrschaft in Süditalien vom 9. bis 11. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden, 1967), passim (= *La dominazione bizantina nell'Italia meridionale dal IX all'XI secolo* [Bari, 1978]).

mismatch in coverage seems particularly odd in the light of Michael Psellos's claim that Phokas constituted the more potent threat to Basil II. Whether Psellos is to be believed or not, other medieval historians indicate that the insurrections of both rebels, not only those of the Skleroi, were extremely serious.¹⁹ Nonetheless, a mismatch in Skylitzes' coverage of the tenth century makes sense once his narrative is considered in the context of the eleventh-century period in which he was writing. By the final third of the eleventh century, the Skleroi remained an important political family, while the Phokades had disappeared. This example indicates the extent to which the historian of Basil's reign has at all times to be alert to the possibility of similar distortions, not only in Skylitzes' account, but in all historical narratives, particularly those written long after the events they describe.²⁰ Indeed, in a recent study of Michael Psellos' *Chronographia* Anthony Kaldellis has argued that any attempt to extract information and interpretation from Byzantine historiography must take place against an understanding of the wider literary, intellectual and political contexts in which such texts were composed.²¹

However, while the historical narratives of this period present so many difficulties, another way of approaching the internal history of the reign is to begin with other background contexts, such as important structural changes in the economy and society of tenth-century Byzantium. Here I wish merely to mention two important backdrops. First, the growth of the Byzantine economy visible in the archaeological record across the empire.²² And second, the striking transformation in the armed forces that was precipitated by the waning of Arab raids in the early tenth century. As recent scholarship has illustrated, the collapse of the Arab threat reduced Byzantium's need for local defence, with the result that the armies of the themes, especially those in Anatolia, were gradually demilitarised. Their place

¹⁹ Psellos, I, 7.

²⁰ C.J. Holmes, "Basil II and the Government of Empire (976–1025)" (D.Phil. diss., Oxford University, 1999), chaps. 2 and 3.

²¹ Kaldellis, *The Argument of Psellos's Chronographia*, 1–21.

²² See in the first instance A. Harvey, *Economic Expansion in the Byzantine Empire 900–1200* (Cambridge, 1989); also P. Lemerle, *Cinq études sur le XI^e siècle byzantin* (Paris, 1977), 272–93; C.A. Mango, *Byzantium. The Empire of New Rome* (London, 1980), 81–3; A.P. Kazhdan and A. Wharton Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Berkeley, 1985), 24–39; for the situation in Asia Minor see in this volume Cheynet pp. 2–5; Holmes, "Basil II", chap. 4.

was taken by a more centralised, professional field army. Although the scale of the military achievements of this army has sometimes been exaggerated, nonetheless, Byzantine forces annexed substantial territorial regions to the east of the Taurus and Anti-Taurus mountains during the tenth century, particularly under the leadership of Nikephoros Phokas, *domestikos of the scholai* in the late 950s, and emperor between 963 and 969.²³

As far as the internal history of Basil's reign is concerned, the most important question presented by these developments within the economy and the empire's armed forces is: who appeared to be their beneficiary? Who, when Basil became emperor in 976, was profiting from growing prosperity and military reorganisation? The answer, I would suggest, is that it depends on who's talking. The imperial voice articulated it tenth-century anti-powerful Novels argues that the winners were the state's principal office holders, those individuals who could take advantage of their public office to accumulate private resources of land and manpower. The Novel issued by Romanos Lekapenos in 934 ordered that:

none of the distinguished *magistroi* or *patrikioi*, nor those honoured with governorships or generalships or civil or military ranks, nor of those reckoned in the Senate, nor of the thematic governors or subgovernors, nor of the very pious metropolitans or archbishops or bishops or abbots or ecclesiastical dignitaries, or those having protection and supervision of pious and imperial foundations . . . [should] steal into village land or fields by reason of purchase or gift or inheritance.

The emperor went on to summarise the acute danger such persons presented to the state:

For the authority of such persons [the 'powerful'] has exulted over the great misery of the 'poor', by the number of their servants, their hirelings and those otherwise attending and accompanying their prominent positions, which brings in prosecutions, forced services, . . . oppressions and distresses, and has introduced no little destruction of the common good.²⁴

²³ See in the first instance J. Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society in the Byzantine World 565–1204* (London, 1999), 83–5; Whittow, *Making of Orthodox Byzantium*, 323–7.

²⁴ Zepos and Zepos, *Ius*, I, 209; translation in C.M. Brand, *Icon and Minaret: Sources of Byzantine and Islamic Civilization* (New Jersey, 1969), 83. There is a new translation by E. McGeer, *The Land Legislation of the Macedonian Emperors* (Toronto, 2000), 111–32, based on the edition by N. Svoronos and P. Gounaridis, *Les Nouvelles des empereurs Macédoniens concernant la terre et les stratiotes* (Athens, 1994), 190–217.

However, an alternative picture is offered by the author of the mid-tenth-century military manual *De velitatione* or *On Skirmishing*. Representing the voice of the serving military officer in the locality the author of this text suggests that by the second half of the tenth century it was the state itself that was the real winner. The author complains about the disturbances caused by civil officials sent from Constantinople. He identifies such officials as ‘tribute levying manikins’ who ‘contribute absolutely nothing to the common good . . . but store up many talents of gold’, and dishonour the indigenous thematic troops.²⁵ Nor was this provincial army officer alone in his allegations. Arab geographers also noted the greater reach of the state in the provinces. Ibn Hauqal, writing in the second half of the tenth century, explains that part of the customs receipts at the port of Trebizond on the Black Sea had once been pocketed by local officials; now, however, all receipts were collected on behalf of the emperor.²⁶ In the light of these comments, it is important to bear in mind that the power of the state may have been rather stronger than the imperial voice audible in the tenth-century Novels would wish us to know. In these circumstances it is quite possible that these Novels contain a large dose degree of bombast and rhetoric that masked the increasingly penetrative authority of the state itself. The notion that the legislation of the tenth century could be more about the articulation and promotion of imperial power than about the defence of an enfeebled and beleaguered state will recur throughout this paper.

The revolts of Bardas Skleros and Phokas (976–989)

With these initial thoughts about historiography and socio-economic developments in place, it is now possible to turn more directly to changes and continuities within political society and the governance of the empire during the reign of Basil itself. The starting point of this discussion must be the revolts of Bardas Skleros and Bardas Phokas, which broke out during the first thirteen years of the reign. This period, 976–89, is of critical importance for two reasons. First,

²⁵ G. Dagron and H. Mihăescu, *Le Traité sur la guérilla (De velitatione) de l'empereur Nicéphore Phocas* (Paris, 1986), 109–11; G.T. Dennis, *Three Byzantine Military Treatises* (Washington, 1985), 217.

²⁶ Ibn Hauqal, 193.

because most modern models of the internal history of the reign are shaped by Michael Psellos' claims that it was these civil wars which persuaded Basil to crush the greater families and refocus the governance of the empire on his own person. And second because this is the period which receives the best and the widest coverage in the primary sources. In addition to the extensive treatment in the Greek and non-Greek historical narratives, we can add letters, a diplomatic report and a treaty from the contemporary Buyid court in Baghdad, as well as several tenth-century Georgian manuscript colophons, and at least two inscriptions, one of which has yet to be published.²⁷ The significance of such a plethora of evidence is that political behaviour in Byzantium can, for once during Basil's generally under-reported reign, be examined from a wide variety of angles.

The narrative of these revolts is swiftly summarised. In 976 Bardas Skleros, *doux* of Mesopotamia launched a revolt in the east of the empire which lasted for nearly three years until he was defeated in the early spring of 979 by Bardas Phokas, the *domestikos of the scholai*. Following his defeat Skleros found himself first exiled and subsequently imprisoned in Buyid Baghdad. Seven years later Basil II launched a major offensive against the Bulgarians, was outmanoeuvred in the passes of the Haemus mountains, and subjected to an overwhelming defeat. This defeat provided the cue for Skleros's release by the Buyids and his return to the empire. Bardas Phokas marched eastwards to deal with Skleros. He imprisoned him, but then proceeded to launch his own revolt. Phokas's rebellion lasted

²⁷ Greek texts that comment on the revolts include Leo Diac., Skylitzes, Psellos, the *Miracles of St Eugenios*, the *Life of St Phantinos*, and the *Life of St Nikon*. In addition to the historical accounts of Yahya ibn Said, Ibn Miskawayh, al-Rudhrawari, the Arabic record includes an account of the embassy by the Buyid envoy Ibn Shahram to Constantinople in 981/2 (Amedroz and Margoliouth, *Eclipse*, VI, 23–34); a propaganda letter of the Buyid emir Adud ad Daula issued after Ibn Shahram's embassy (J.C. Bürgel, *Die Hofkorrespondenz Adud al-Dawlas* [Wiesbaden, 1965], 155–6); the treaty listing the terms of the release of the Skleroi from Baghdad in 987 and a letter to Skleros from a Buyid general in March 990 (M. Canard, "Deux documents arabes sur Bardas Sklèros", *Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici* 5 (1939), 55–69). In Armenian see Stephen of Taron, and also Gregory of Narek's *History of the Holy Cross of Aparank*: J.P. Mahé, "Basile II et Byzance vus par Grigor Narekac", *TM* 11 (1991), 555–72. For Georgian manuscript colophons and an inscription in Georgian referring to the revolt of Skleros at Zarzma see N. Adontz, "Tornik le moine", *Byzantion* 13 (1938), 143–64. An unpublished inscription from Syngراس in Cyprus refers to the revolt (to be published in *BMGS* 26 (2002) by Dr Tassos Papacostas, Research Fellow at King's College, London).

for nearly two years and was only crushed when Basil II secured mercenary troops from Kiev, part of the 'deal' which saw Vladimir prince of the Rus convert to Christianity. Phokas was eventually killed in battle near Abydos in the spring of 987. Following the death of Phokas, Skleros was released. He briefly reopened his revolt, but surrendered to imperial forces shortly afterwards.²⁸ While more could be said about the detail of these rebellions, further investigation of the narrative is not my concern here. Instead, I wish to consider what these revolts have to say about the nature of political authority within Byzantium during Basil's reign, about the character of relationships between the emperor and other political agents, and about those changes which were, or were not, precipitated in the governance of the empire by this period of civil war. Central to this discussion are those questions Jean-Claude Cheynet has asked of periods of revolt in Byzantium in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Why do rebellions happen? What are the material and ideological resources of rebels? What do rebels gain by revolt?²⁹

For George Ostrogorsky it was the rebels' access to private family wealth and manpower, especially the resources of their great landed estates in central Anatolia, which made Skleros and Phokas such potent challenges to the emperor's political authority.³⁰ However, whether or not the Phokades, the Skleroi, and their various supporters owned large eastern land-holdings and were supported by sizeable personal retinues, it is clear that neither of the major revolts of the first thirteen years of Basil's reign was underpinned by private family wealth or manpower.³¹ Instead the rebels' most impor-

²⁸ The most detailed and well-rounded account of the revolts is to be found in Forsyth, "The Chronicle of Yahya ibn Sa'id", 370–462. See also Adontz, "Tornik", 143–64; W. Seibt, *Die Skleroi* (Vienna, 1976), 29–58.

²⁹ Cheynet, *Pouvoir*, passim.

³⁰ Ostrogorsky, *Byzantine State*, 298–303.

³¹ There is considerable support among modern historians for the notion that families such as the Phokades and Skleroi owned large estates on the Anatolian plateau: M. Kaplan, "Les grands propriétaires de Cappadoce", in C.D. Fonseca (ed.), *Le aree omogenee della civiltà rupestre nell'ambito dell'impero bizantino: la Cappadocia* (Lecce, 1981), 125–58; Cheynet, *Pouvoirs*, 213–229. It has recently been argued that two Cappadocian rock churches, Tokalı Kilise at Göreme and the Great Pigeon House at Çavuşin, provide evidence for Phokas family estates and political affinities in western Cappadocia (N. Thierry, "La peinture de Cappadoce au X^e siècle: recherches sur les commanditaires de la nouvelle église de Tokalı et d'autres monuments", in *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and his Age, Second International Byzantine Conference, Delphi 1987* (Athens 1989), 218–33. L. Rodley, "The Pigeon House Church at

tant asset was their tenure of official command within the Byzantine army. Comparison of different phases of the revolts makes this general point with greatest force. All the historical narratives indicate that when Bardas Skleros rebelled in 976, his threat lay in his role as *doux* of Mesopotamia.³² This was the most senior military command over the units (*tagmata*) of the mobile field army that were stationed in the central regions of the empire's eastern frontier. It was a position which also gave Skleros the power to strike deals with neighbouring eastern states,³³ control over imperial fortresses in the east, and access to the fiscal revenues with which to pay his troops.³⁴ This wealth of resources contrasts dramatically with the general's poverty during his second revolt in 987 when he held no public office. Although he was initially given some manpower and money by the authorities in Baghdad on his return to Byzantium, his allies soon fell away, leaving him with only his personal retinue of about three hundred men. Within a very short time he was taken prisoner by Phokas.³⁵ Of course one could argue that Skleros' threat was less

Çavuşin", *JÖB* 33 (1983), 301–339). However, the empirical evidence supporting the notion of vast magnate estates in Anatolia is slim and has yet to be proved conclusively.

³² Skylitzes, 315; Yahya, II, 372; Stephen of Taron, 140.

³³ Skleros negotiated deals with the Armenian prince of Mokh, a region south of Lake Van, and the Hamdanid emir of Mosul, Abu Taghlib, who provided light cavalry troops in return for a marriage arrangement (Stephen of Taron, 140–1; Skylitzes, 315–6, 320–1; Yahya, II, 398; Amedroz and Margoliouth, *Eclipse*, 5: 424–6. Seibt (*Die Skleroi*, 38) and Forsyth, ("The Chronicle of Yahya", 377) both refer to the marriage alliance between Abu Taghlib and Skleros but do not discuss it in detail. This lack of interest is surprising since such an alliance may have involved the marriage of a Christian to a Muslim.

³⁴ At the beginning of his first revolt, Skleros established his campaign headquarters at Charpete (also known as Harput in Armenian, and Hisn Ziyad in Arabic), a strong point in the Anzitenne, the region east of the Anti Taurus which he controlled in his capacity as *doux* of Mesopotamia. He also sequestered the fiscal revenues of nearby Melitene (Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 315–6; Yahya, *PO* 23 (1932), 372–3; J.D. Howard-Johnston, "Crown lands and the Defence of Imperial Authority in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries", *BF* 26 (1995), 93; idem., "Byzantine Anzitenne", in S. Mitchell (ed.), *Armies and Frontiers in Anatolia* (BAR International Series, Oxford, 1983), 248–50; A. Bivar, "Bardas Skleros, the Buwayids and the Marwanids at Hisn Ziyad in the light of an unnoticed Arab inscription", in S. Freeman and D. Kennedy (eds.), *Defence of the Roman and Byzantine Frontiers*, BAR International Series 297 (i) (Oxford, 1986), 9–21; T. Sinclair, *Eastern Turkey: an Architectural and Archaeological Survey*, 4 vols. (London, 1987–90), III, 13–35.

³⁵ Yahya, II, 421–3; Stephen of Taron, 187–8; Skylitzes, 334–6 Canard, "Deux documents", 63–4, 68–9.

potent in 987 because his estates had been confiscated by the imperial authorities while he was in exile. However, if we turn away from the Skleros family and look instead at the Phokades, then we find the same phenomenon: that such families only presented a powerful threat when they held senior military positions. Thus, when Bardas Phokas was deprived of the office of *doux* of Chaldia by the emperor John Tzimiskes in 971 he attempted to launch a rebellion from his private estates in Asia Minor. But he attracted few adherents and his revolt ended swiftly.³⁶ In contrast when he revolted against Basil II in 987, he held the office of *domestikos of the scholai*, controlled the entire field army of the east, and had access to the fiscal resources of the eastern half of the empire. His revolt lasted for nearly two years.³⁷

Evidence from both the Skleros and Phokas revolts demonstrates that the key to political power in Byzantium in the later tenth century lay in the tenure of public office, and in particular control of the army. In making this suggestion I am not, of course, arguing that important families such as the Skleroi and the Phokades did not have retinues or private estates. Nor am I suggesting that they did not use their access to public office to enhance these private resources. However, I think it is important to stress that it was not private resources alone that made the Skleroi and the Phokades dangerous to Basil II. Indeed, a strong sign of the degree to which it was public office rather than private estates which underpinned political authority is the treatment that many rebel clans experienced after they surrendered to the emperor. Let us look first at that family which Michael Psellos identified as the most dangerous of Basil II's enemies: the Phokades. Now, it is sometimes argued, as a result of a very loose reading of Psellos's testimony, that the Phokas family and their immediate allies were completely destroyed by Basil.³⁸ But this is not entirely true. Certainly, some rebels were executed or imprisoned. After Bardas Phokas was killed on the battle field (dying either from his wounds or from poison cunningly introduced into his drinking flask), his head was paraded around the empire as

³⁶ Skylitzes, 291–4; Leo Diac., 112–26; Cheynet, *Pouvoir*, 24–5.

³⁷ Skylitzes, 332–38; Leo Diac., 173–4; Yahya, II, 417–26; Stephen of Taron, 187–90.

³⁸ Sifonas, “Basile II”, 123–4.

a warning to others.³⁹ One of his commanders, Kalokyros Delphinas, was impaled.⁴⁰ Yet not all rebels were punished so harshly. Nikephoros Phokas, the eldest son of the rebel Bardas, received a new estate after the revolt was over.⁴¹ At the end of Basil's reign Nikephoros and his brother Bardas still held the senior titles of *patrikioi*.⁴² Meanwhile, Eustathios Maleinos, one of the Phokades' closest allies, remained in control of his estates for several years after the Phokas revolt was defeated. It was only later that he was put under house arrest in Constantinople. And it was only after he died that his estates were confiscated by the fisc.⁴³

Yet while this evidence demonstrates that at one level former rebels were not treated with uniform brutality, nonetheless, the medieval historical narratives make it clear that the insurrectionists *were* still politically neutered, precisely because they were denied access to public office. Thus, the Armenian historian Aristakes of Lastivert describes the frustration that the Phokades felt throughout Basil's reign because they were deprived of official responsibilities. Aristakes uses a powerful metaphor: that they ranted like caged lions.⁴⁴ It is intriguing that the Greek historian John Skylitzes uses similar imagery in his description of Eustathios Maleinos' house arrest in Constantinople. He depicts the emperor Basil keeping Maleinos ensnared within privilege. 'Supplying him plentifully with everything he needed, Basil detained Eustathios as if he were nourishing a wild beast in a cage.'⁴⁵ Indeed, there is strong case that such imprisonment in paradise was a style of punishment that Basil often meted out to his adversaries. Such, of course, was his treatment of his brother Constantine. As Michael Psellos indicates, Constantine was allowed to lead a life of

³⁹ Skylitzes, 336–7; Psellos, I, 11; Yahya, II, 426.

⁴⁰ Skylitzes, 336. Stephen of Taron suggests that Delphinas was crucified (Stephen of Taron, 188). Basil appears to have ensured that the fate of Delphinas should endure as a terrifying exemplar. A column in Delphinas's memory was erected at the place where he was executed. St Symeon the New Theologian discovered this column when he was exiled to Chalcedon from Constantinople early in the eleventh century: P.I. Hausherr (ed. and trans.), *Vie de Syméon le Nouveau Théologien (949–1022) par Nicéas Stéthatos*, *Orientalia Christiana* 12 (Rome, 1928), 132; McGuckin, "Symeon the New Theologian", 30.

⁴¹ Yahya, II, 427.

⁴² Skylitzes, 366, 372.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 332, 340.

⁴⁴ Aristakes of Lastivert, 16–7.

⁴⁵ Skylitzes, 340.

luxury guarded by his own small retinue; however, deprived of genuine public office, he was rendered politically impotent.⁴⁶

Nonetheless, the principle that deprivation of public office was all that was needed to tame political opponents in the later tenth century runs into one important difficulty. For although Psellos implies that Basil II emasculated former rebel families in the post-civil war period, prosopographical research indicates that some survived and were restored to public office including, most notably, members of the Skleros axis. Psellos himself notes that 'the generals and the others who had taken part in his revolt were to retain their present ranks . . . they would be deprived neither of property they used to own nor of the property that they had received from him (i.e. from Skleros), nor would they lose any of their other assets.'⁴⁷ Bardas Skleros himself was given the title of *kouropalates*, a position which made him junior only to the emperor Basil.⁴⁸ In subsequent decades those who had fought with Skleros were frequently appointed to public office, above all to positions of army command on the eastern frontier.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Psellos, I, 2–3. It has been suggested that Psellos's depiction of the indolent Constantine is a fiction embroidered by the historian for his own rhetorical purposes. A more optimistic picture of Constantine's fate has been imagined in some quarters. It has been suggested, for example, that Constantine VIII was left to control Constantinople and the Great Palace while his brother Basil went on campaign on the frontiers: S. Runciman, "The Country and Suburban Palaces of the Emperors", in A.E. Laiou-Thomadakis (ed.), *Essays in Honor of Peter Charanis* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1980), 219. This thesis, however, is not supported by the evidence. Ibn al-Dawadari, one of the later Arab historians who reports on Basil II's attack on northern Syria in 995, indicates that Constantine VIII was not left in the capital but accompanied his brother on campaign: W. Farag, "The Aleppo Question: a Byzantine-Fatimid Conflict of Interest in Northern Syria in the Later Tenth Century", *BMGS* 14 (1990), 53. It is also clear that Constantine had little role in governance at the end of Basil's reign, and instead lived in semi-retirement in a suburban palace. As Basil lay dying, Constantine had to be recalled to the Great Palace from Nicaea (Aristakes of Lastivert, 25). Yahya, III, 481, indicates that Basil had built a palace for his brother outside Constantinople. Although it is difficult to know when Constantine VIII was retired from any active position in government, I have little doubt that Psellos is correct in suggesting that at some point in his reign Basil ensured his brother would play no meaningful role in the future.

⁴⁷ Psellos, I, 16.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 16–17; Skylitzes, 339.

⁴⁹ His son Romanos fought the Fatimids in 992–3 and his lieutenant Pegasios served in northern Syria in the first decade of the eleventh century (Stephen of Taron, 199; Yahya, II, 466; Cheynet, *Pouvoir*, 335, n. 72; also see Cheynet in this volume pp. 15, 18). Michael Bourtzes, who defected to the Skleros party in 977/8, served as *doux* of Antioch in the first half of the 990s: J.C. Cheynet and J.F. Vannier,

The rehabilitation of the Skleroi has been noted by several modern historians, each of whom uses this phenomenon to draw wider conclusions about the nature of political authority in Byzantium during Basil's reign. For C.S. Sifonas the rehabilitation of the Skleroi undermines the very foundations of the idea that Basil's reign should be seen as period of transformation in the relationship between the emperor and the political elite and in the organisation of internal governance. Instead Sifonas has argued that while the Phokades and their closest allies may have been purged, Basil II actively fostered the rest of the later tenth and eleventh-century aristocracy within his administration. He continued to rely on old dynasties like the Skleroi, while at the same time nurturing new families with origins both inside and outside the empire. In Sifonas's interpretation, Basil II emerges as a relatively conservative figure who governed according to traditional rather than revolutionary principles, and who enhanced rather than reduced the role of the aristocracy within the Byzantine polity.⁵⁰

An alternative explanation has been offered by Jean-Claude Cheynet, which forms part of a much more extensive explanatory model of the internal political history of the empire in the tenth to eleventh centuries. According to this interpretation two parties of magnate families emerged during the course of the tenth century with large estates on the Anatolian plateau, factions whose mutual distrust any competent emperor sought to exploit for his own purposes. This distrust had first arisen when Romanos Lekapenos, the representative of a 'powerful' family from the theme of the Armeniakon, came to the throne in 919–20 at the expense of Leo Phokas. He immediately alienated the Phokades from positions of authority and appointed in their stead the Kourkouas family, a clan allied by marriage to the Lekapenoi, whose territorial base was also in the Armeniakon; this nexus also seems to have included the Skleroi located further east in Mesopotamia. According to Cheynet when Constantine

Études prosopographiques (Paris, 1986), 18–24; see also Cheynet in this volume p. 16. Members of the Taronites family helped Basil suppress the Phokas revolt and served in the Balkans in the 990s (Skylitzes, 320, 339, 341; Stephen of Taron, 141–2, 198; Yahya, II, 424). Meanwhile, Zaphranik of Mokh, an Armenian prince who supported Skleros in his first revolt became a *manglabites*, (member of the imperial *het-airia* or palace guard) during the 980s (Stephen of Taron, 141; Mahé, "Basile II et Byzance vus par Grigor Narekac'i", 560, 565–7).

⁵⁰ Sifonas, "Basile II", 118–33.

Porphyrogenitus overthrew the Lekapenoi in 945, he chose to consolidate his authority by rehabilitating the opponents of the previous regime. Thus the Cappadocian Phokades were promoted to top military offices with Bardas Phokas (the grandfather of the rebel of 987) becoming *domestikos* of the *scholai*, and his three sons *strategoi* of three Anatolian themes. The bloody politics of Basil II's minority extensively deepened the existing fissure within the aristocracy of the plateau. In 969 Nikephoros Phokas, the senior emperor and guardian to the young Basil was viciously murdered and replaced as emperor by a member of the Kourkouas clan, John Tzimiskes (969–76). The result of this palace coup was a blood feud with Tzimiskes himself being threatened by at least two Phokas rebellions. During the adult reign of Basil Cheynet argues that the emperor was able both to weather the revolts of the first fifteen years of his reign, and to reconstruct his battered authority in the aftermath of civil war, precisely because he was able to manage and exploit this irreconcilable hatred. Thus Basil used Bardas Phokas to lead the army against Skleros in 978–9. In contrast after the Phokas revolt had been suppressed in 989, Basil regained control of government and reasserted his own authority by ostracising the Phokades and rehabilitating the Skleroi.⁵¹

However, while acknowledging the sophistication of Cheynet's model, I suspect that the emperor's decision to reinstate the Skleroi was dictated less by the need to manage the strengths of an Anatolian aristocracy, and more by the international context in which Byzantium found itself around the year 990. What was that international context? The answer is quite simple: war. In the later 980s and early 990s, the empire of Basil II came under attack on at least two fronts, from the Bulgarians in the west, and from the Fatimids of Egypt in the east.⁵² Meanwhile, Basil had also conceded control over the far north-east of the empire to the Iberian (Georgian) princes and nobles of Tao in return for their assistance in defeating the first rebellion

⁵¹ Cheynet, *Pouvoir*, 321–36; see also P. Stephenson, "A Development in Nomenclature on the Seals of the Byzantine Provincial Aristocracy in the Late Tenth Century", *REB* 52 (1994), 197–200 who interprets competition among the two main aristocratic parties of the Anatolian plateau in the later tenth-century as the catalyst for the appearance of family names on seals.

⁵² Jean-Claude Cheynet (p. 71 below) comments on the rivalry between Byzantium and the Fatimids as the dominant force in the Near East in the later tenth century.

of Bardas Skleros.⁵³ I would argue that the strategic realities of such a grave external position provided the context for the revivification of the careers of rebel commanders such as the Skleroi. Hamstrung by a lack of generals with sufficient military experience, Basil had little choice but to recall some of those figures whose loyalty was open to doubt. Skylitzes, for example, points out that Basil II was eager to employ Romanos Skleros as his lieutenant, when Skleros unexpectedly deserted his father's cause around 987, because he was bereft of experienced commanders and knew that Romanos was 'a skilful man, effective and very resourceful in military matters'.⁵⁴ Nor was it just the Skleroi who were restored to public office, but also certain members of the Phokas axis. Thus, Leo Melissenos, who had commanded rebel troops during the siege of Abydos in 988, was spared the humiliation of being paraded through Constantinople when the Phokas rebellion failed. By 994 he was once again involved in warfare on the eastern frontier, leading a party of reinforcements from Constantinople to assist in the war effort against the Fatimids.⁵⁵

The events of the Skleros and Phokas revolts suggest that the most important political tensions within the Byzantine state during the early years of the reign of Basil sprang not from the private power of leading families, but instead from the increased importance of the army and the political authority of the generals. This authority had been growing throughout the tenth century, largely in the context of Byzantium's armed offensive in the east.⁵⁶ One important implication of this conclusion is that any disagreement between emperor and generals about military or foreign policy could immediately threaten the internal stability of the empire, a fact corroborated by an independent and contemporary eyewitness to Byzantine domestic politics in the early 980s. In 981–2 Ibn Shahram, ambassador from the Buyids of Baghdad, arrived in Constantinople as part of a long series of embassies connected to Bardas Skleros' imprisonment in Iraq. In his report he indicated that hostility between Basil and his leading generals, especially the Phokas family, over how to deal with the military and diplomatic situation on the empire's eastern

⁵³ Forsyth, "The Chronicle of Yahya ibn Sa'id", chaps. 7–8.

⁵⁴ Skylitzes, 335; see also above n. 49.

⁵⁵ Forsyth, "The Chronicle of Yahya ibn Sa'id", 134; Skylitzes, 338; Leo Diac, 171–3; Yahya, II, 440; see also in this volume Cheynet p. 20.

⁵⁶ See also in this regard, Whittow, *Making of Orthodox Byzantium*, 359–60.

frontier was so great that Basil feared he could be deposed.⁵⁷ The extent to which disagreements over military policy, foreign affairs, and control of the army lay at the heart of disorder during the early part of Basil's reign was at its most manifest in 986 when Basil decided to attack Bulgaria. As Marc Lauxtermann points out in this volume, Basil was criticised by former soldiers such as John Geometres for forsaking experienced commanders in his military enterprises.⁵⁸ This dissatisfaction is echoed in Skylitzes' testimony. He records that one of the key causes of the Phokas revolt in 987 was the emperor's refusal to allow the Phokades to join his expedition to Bulgaria, and his orders that they should keep watch over the eastern frontier while he was away.⁵⁹

The importance of the army within the state has another important implication for our conception of political power in Byzantium during Basil's reign. If control of the army was so significant to the internal stability of the empire, then it did not greatly matter whether this key resource was controlled by long-established families such as the Phokades and Skleroi, or by a relative newcomer. Whoever controlled the army would *always* present a threat to the emperor. In this sense then, Basil's defeat of the Skleroi and the Phokades in 989 was but a short-term palliative. As long as the army remained at the epicentre of political power in Byzantium, Basil could not consider himself safe. The only obvious way out of this structural impasse was for the emperor himself to take control of the army and of foreign affairs. This, of course, is precisely Basil tried to do, but with little success, when he invaded Bulgaria in 986.⁶⁰ It may also have shaped his decision to organise a substantial offensive against Bulgaria in 991 once the civil wars with Skleros and Phokas were over.⁶¹ However, while the empire was at war on two fronts, in Bulgaria and in the east, the imperial position remained inherently unstable, since one active army remained beyond the emperor's personal control.

Hints that domestic instability born of two 'hot' frontiers continued to undermine Basil's position after the defeat of Skleros and

⁵⁷ Amedroz and Margoliouth, *Eclipse*, VI, 28–35.

⁵⁸ See in this volume Lauxtermann p. 11.

⁵⁹ Skylitzes, 332; see also Cheynet in this volume p. 1.

⁶⁰ Skylitzes, 330–1; Leo Diac., 171–3.

⁶¹ Skylitzes, 339–43; Yahya, II, 431; Stephen of Taron, 198–9.

Phokas are to be found in Yahya ibn Sa'id's coverage of the Byzantine-Fatimid conflict in northern Syria during the early 990s. While Basil himself campaigned in the Balkans, he entrusted the senior position on the eastern frontier, *doux* of Antioch, to Michael Bourtzes, an experienced commander, but a man whose loyalty to Basil during the Skleros, and possibly the Phokas revolts, had wavered on many occasions.⁶² His relationship with Basil continued to be strained after 989. In 992 and 994 he suffered two heavy defeats against Fatimid armies in the field. On both occasions he blamed a lack of troops for his failure, despite receiving at least one detachment of reinforcements, indeed those troops led by Leo Melissenos, the Phokas rebel pardoned in 989.⁶³ By 995 it was clear that Bourtzes' conduct had become insupportable. In addition to his defeats he was also accused of exacerbating the conflict with the Muslims by imprisoning a Fatimid envoy.⁶⁴ The deterioration of the situation in the east forced Basil to divert part of his Balkan army from Bulgaria and invade northern Syria. The sudden appearance of the emperor at the head of a large army forced the Fatimids to withdraw. Bourtzes was sacked and replaced by another experienced commander, whose loyalty appears to have been unimpeachable, Damian Dalassenos.⁶⁵ Yet the events of 992–5 did little to suggest that conducting warfare on two fronts was a long-term solution to cordial relations between the emperor and senior generals.⁶⁶

Thus, it seems to me that if there was a key transformation in Basil's reign, it came with the peace agreement the emperor struck with the Fatimids of Egypt in 1000–01 and the cessation of all-out war in the east.⁶⁷ For this meant that there was no longer any need

⁶² J.C. Cheynet and J.F. Vannier, *Études prosopographiques* (Paris, 1986), 20–1; see also above n. 49.

⁶³ Yahya, II, 438–40; V. Laurent, "La chronologie des gouverneurs d'Antioche sous la seconde domination byzantine", *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth* 38 (1962), 233–4. See above, p. 53.

⁶⁴ Yahya, II, 440.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 443–4; Laurent, "Gouverneurs d'Antioche", 234. For a slightly different reading of the relationship between Bourtzes and Basil see in this volume Cheynet pp. 20–21.

⁶⁶ In this volume Cheynet p. 12 points out the difficulty that Basil faced in conducting war on two fronts.

⁶⁷ Yahya, II, 460–2. This peace agreement followed another lightning intervention on the part of the emperor in northern Syria against the Fatimid position in 999–1000 (see in this volume Cheynet pp. 28–9).

to keep a large army in northern Syria under the command of experienced but potentially disloyal generals. Instead, the military energies of the empire could be concentrated under Basil's own leadership in warfare against the Bulgarians, a theatre of conflict which also allowed the emperor to remain much closer to the epicentre of Byzantine domestic power, Constantinople. The opacity of many of the narrative sources, especially Skylitzes' testimony of Basil's wars in the Balkans, makes it difficult to know whether this strategic shift was planned or fortuitous. That is to say, it is impossible to be sure whether Basil chose to concentrate on the western front in order to contain domestic pressures, or because the threat from the Bulgarians was so potent. The answer is surely a mixture of the two. Nonetheless, it is the net result that is important: that it was in the Balkans after 1000–01 that Basil had the opportunity to consolidate his position at the head of the army and thus as the head of state. Whether Basil himself fought actively, or whether he simply accompanied the armies, he was able to create an image of the warrior emperor, the image that decorates the frontispiece of the Basil psalter.⁶⁸ Moreover, as Sifonas has pointed out, with Basil at the head of the armed forces in the Balkans both old and new families could prosper following traditional military careers: existing members of the elite such as the Taronites; and families with a more recent aristocratic pedigree such as the Botaneiates, Diogenes, and Arcianites.⁶⁹

The Novel of 996

The events and aftermath of the Skleros and Phokas revolts suggest that command within the army rather than the possession of private estates and retinues was the key to political authority in Byzantium during the later tenth century. This conclusion contradicts Ostrogorsky's notion that the central domestic tension in the tenth-century empire was a struggle between emperor and great landed families for control over the territorial and manpower resources of the state.

⁶⁸ Psellos, I, 20–21 suggests that Basil may have guided the army from a distance rather than taking direct control in battle. He notes that Basil preferred not to lead armies in battle from fear of defeat. Instead, he preferred to take charge of army exercises and strategic planning.

⁶⁹ Sifonas, "Basile II", 118–33.

However, the careful reader will note that this army-centred interpretation of political power in Basil's reign fails to accommodate the Novel of 996 issued against the 'powerful'. How, then, does the great Novel of the reign fit into the picture of political authority presented in this paper?

Rosemary Morris has provided one possible interpretation of the Novel of 996: that it was part of a tenth-century tradition that re-worked and reissued law to protect imperial authority in times of crisis.⁷⁰ In the case of Basil, Morris argues quite simply that the 996 Novel enabled the emperor to punish those who had been involved in the rebellions of 976–89. The general notion that the artefacts of the past, including legislation itself, can be reused for the purposes of the present has its attractions given the frequency with which ancient texts and images were used to reinforce imperial legitimacy in medieval Byzantium.⁷¹ Moreover, the text of the Novel itself supports the idea that it was aimed at the greater families who had rebelled against Basil. The Novel names both the Phokades and Maleinoi as the worst kind of 'powerful': those who have abused public office to gain hereditary property.⁷² John Skylitzes also associates Basil's legislation with punishment of the Phokas and Maleinos axis. In his account of the reign he juxtaposes his description of the 996 Novel with the story of Eustathios Maleinos's arrest and the confiscation of his estates in Cappadocia.⁷³ Yet, circumstantial and textual evidence makes it unlikely that the principal ambition of the Novel of 996 was to strip the Phokas and Maleinos families of their private resources, either because the emperor was worried that these families would revolt again, or because he wished to punish them. In the first place, as we have seen, families such as the Phokades and Maleinoi were easily controlled through deprivation of office rather than land; and even where lands were taken away, sequestration was not universal. Second, the legislation's invective against the Phokades and Maleinoi is to be found in a *scholium* added several

⁷⁰ Morris, "The Poor and the Powerful in Tenth-Century Byzantium", 3–27.

⁷¹ P. Magdalino (ed.), *New Constantines: the Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4–13th Centuries* (Aldershot, 1994), passim.

⁷² Zepos and Zepos, *Ius*, I, 265, although it should be noted that the Novel does not suggest that the emperor confiscated any property from either family.

⁷³ Skylitzes, 332, 340; Dagron and Mihăescu, *Le Traité*, 309–10; Cheynet, *Pouvoir*, 214–5.

years after the Novel was issued. This suggests that these families were only later and secondary targets of the legislation.⁷⁴

Yet, if greater families such as the Phokades and Maleinoi were not the prime targets of the legislation, must we assume that this Novel was simply part of an ongoing tenth-century imperial effort to protect the integrity of the fisc, as Lemerle and Kaplan would argue, rather than a vehicle for political change?⁷⁵ A conservative answer to this question would suggest that this exceptionally long and detailed Novel, the most extensive of the Macedonian corpus, deserves much greater examination before it can be integrated into any general analysis of Byzantine fiscal or political history. Such an examination has not, to my knowledge, been conducted yet. However, in this paper I would like to offer a more expansive explanation, volunteering a reading of the legislation which not only picks up on an integral part of the Novel's *original* text, but also offers a context to Michael Psellos' appraisal of political change during Basil's reign. According to this interpretation the superficial target of the legislation was emperor's great-uncle Basil the *parakoimomenos*. However, the main purpose of the Novel was to enable the emperor to impose his own authority at the imperial court and at the centre of the empire's political affairs.

The career of Basil the *parakoimomenos* is already well-known. He was the illegitimate son of the tenth-century emperor Romanos Lekapenos (920–44). Unlike his half-brothers, he survived the deposition of the Lekapenois by Constantine Porphyrogenitus in 945, and went on to serve a variety of emperors during the second half of the tenth century, including his great-nephew Basil II.⁷⁶ In the process he became the pivot of Byzantine political society, striking deals with court officials within Constantinople itself and with leading military commanders on the frontiers. It was, for example, the *parakoimomenos*' influence within the Great Palace and his control over Constantinople that enabled Nikephoros Phokas to enter the city and be crowned emperor in 963.⁷⁷ Basil was not only a central figure at court, he

⁷⁴ Svoronos, "La nouvelle de Basile II concernant les puissants", 433.

⁷⁵ See above note 6.

⁷⁶ The *parakoimomenos*'s half-sister Helen, the daughter of Romanos Lekapenos, was the paternal grandmother of Basil II and Constantine VIII.

⁷⁷ Skylitzes, 258.

was also a literary figure and military commander in his own right.⁷⁸ Although the *parakoimomenos*, the tenth-century 'man for all seasons', was entering the autumn of his career when his namesake and great-nephew Basil II became emperor, nonetheless, he still exercised considerable power during the early years of the reign. Michael Psellos dwells most extensively on the *parakoimomenos*' role as the guardian and guide of the young Basil II; but other medieval texts also confirm his central role at court.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, his control over the young emperor did not last for long. By the early 980s the two Basils had become estranged, principally over relations with the emirate of Aleppo in northern Syria, a process of disaffection recorded in general terms by Michael Psellos and in more detail by the Buyid envoy Ibn Shahram.⁸⁰ The *parakoimomenos* was eventually removed from office in 985, before the emperor's invasion of Bulgaria and the outbreak of the Phokas revolt. He appears to have died shortly afterwards.⁸¹

Yet, if we are to believe the Novel of 996, the authority of Basil the *parakoimomenos* endured long after his demise. Halfway through this Novel, the emperor Basil includes the provision that all chrysobulls issued when the *parakoimomenos* was in power are to be considered invalid unless they have been checked by the emperor himself. Crucially, the emperor makes it clear that this is not the first time he has issued this decree, but instead that such measures have been in force since the time of the *parakoimomenos*' fall, a statement that implies that Basil's attack on his great-uncle has lasted for at least a decade, from 985 to 996.⁸² Yet, how is the longevity of this attack to be interpreted? Perhaps as a sign that the *parakoimomenos*' immediate political associates were too strong to be neutralised immediately in 985? This is one possibility. However, I would suggest that read within the context of the Novel as a whole, the attack on the emperor's great-uncle can be seen less as an *ad homines* assault on a clearly defined circle of political intimates, and more as part of a

⁷⁸ W.G. Brokkaar, "Basil Lacapenus. Byzantium in the Tenth Century", *Studia Byzantina et Neohellenica Neerlandica* 3 (Leiden, 1972), 199–234; see Cheynet in this volume p. 1.

⁷⁹ He was closely involved in efforts to defeat the first Skleros revolt (Skylitzes, 314–24).

⁸⁰ Psellos, *Chronographie*, I, 12–14; Amedroz and Margoliouth, *Eclipse*, VI, 28–35; Cheynet in this volume p. 1.

⁸¹ Skylitzes, 335; Leo Diac., 172.

⁸² Zepos and Zepos, *Ius*, I, 270–1.

more general attempt on the part of the emperor to replace his great uncle as the fulcrum of Byzantine political society.⁸³ Such an imperative would certainly accord with the overriding ambition of the Novel: the desire to create an impression of imperial omniscience, omnipotence and personal control over every level of governance from the very highest to the lowest. One of the other places in the Novel where we can see Basil creating this impression most clearly is at the point when he abolishes the customary immunity from inquiry and confiscation granted to those who had illegally seized lands from the 'poor' after forty years had passed.⁸⁴ In rescinding this measure Basil granted the fisc unrestricted powers to review the landed position of any member of the 'powerful', a group explicitly identified as comprising the same functionaries as those listed in the emperor Romanos' Novel of 934.⁸⁵ As Basil himself acknowledged it was impossible for imperial authorities in Constantinople to control precisely what its functionaries did in the locality.⁸⁶ Nonetheless, by including this open-ended provision Basil sent out a brutal message to his officials that the state *could*, if it chose, strike them down at any point.⁸⁷ Nor did Basil merely warn of his intentions. He also provided a terrifying exemplar in a certain Philokales, the *protoves-tiarios* who accumulated lands within his native *chorion*, but whose estates were then confiscated by the emperor and returned to his original neighbours.⁸⁸

In these senses, then, the Novel of 996 was not so much about depriving the 'powerful' of their private resources, although it could

⁸³ While it is possible that some of Basil the *parakoimomenos*'s party, such as John Geometres and even Symeon Metaphrastes, were marginalised after 985, other adherents, such as Stephen of Nikomedia remained within the service of the emperor. See in this volume Marc Lauxtermann for the career of Geometres during the reign of Basil and Christian Høgel for Symeon Metaphrastes. Stephen, Metropolitan of Nikomedia was one of the most serious adversaries St Symeon the New Theologian encountered at the imperial court in the early eleventh century: *Vie de Syméon*, ed. Hausherr, 104–30.

⁸⁴ Zepos and Zepos, *Ius*, I, 263–4.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 265. See above p. 43 for the list in the legislation of Romanos. A marginal note to the 996 novel extended the list of powerful to include *protokentarchoi*. However, it is unclear whether this marginal note was added by Basil II himself or by a later interpolator (Svoronos, "La novelle de Basile II concernant les puissants", 433).

⁸⁶ Zepos and Zepos, *Ius*, I, 267.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 269.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 265.

be used to confiscate estates; nor was it about protecting a vulnerable fisc. Nor ultimately was it a simple attack on Basil the *parakoimomenos* and his closest associates. It was instead a declaration of intent and of terror, part of a propaganda effort to persuade the whole of the empire's political elite, from the highest-ranking functionary to the lowest, that it was Basil who was in charge.

Re-reading Michael Psellos

The suggestion that the transfer of power from the older to the younger Basil is the key to understanding the nature of political society in this reign receives most support, paradoxically, from the account of Michael Psellos. As we have already seen, Psellos appears to state that it was the revolts of Skleros and Phokas that transformed the emperor's character, and then led to the suppression of the greatest families and Basil's decision to focus the governance of the empire on his own person. This is the thesis of revolution that has entered the modern historiography of Basil's reign. Nonetheless, I would suggest that historians have been rather careless in reading Psellos in this way. For when his text is examined more closely, it becomes apparent that Psellos himself does not discuss the Novel of 996 or the confiscation of lands in connection with his comments about the suppression of the great families. When he speaks of the great families, all he says is that Basil reduced them to the same status as everyone else; a statement that would in fact accord with the survival of so many families in imperial governance already observed in this paper.⁸⁹ Instead, careful examination of Psellos' account reveals that the central conflict in his analysis is the struggle between the emperor and the *parakoimomenos*. As Barbara Crostini has noted, Psellos positions this conflict at the very centre of his narrative, between his treatment of the Phokas and second Skleros revolts. Crostini's explanation for this textual orchestration is Psellos' sympathy for the demise of Basil the *parakoimomenos*. She argues that in Basil the *parakoimomenos*'s career as an intelligent but doomed official, Psellos foreshadows his own chequered life at court in the mid eleventh century.⁹⁰ An

⁸⁹ Psellos, I, 18–19; see above pp. 48–51.

⁹⁰ Crostini, "Basil II's Cultural Life", 59–64.

alternative explanation is offered by Anthony Kaldellis in the context of his wider belief that the *Chronographia* is a highly complex text in which Psellos deploys his consummate rhetorical skills to make a dangerous and recondite appeal for the revival of ancient philosophy in the political sphere. Thus, Kaldellis believes that Psellos intrudes so much material about the *parakoimomenos* into his account because he wants to dwell with grim approval on Basil II's destruction of his great-uncle's monastery. This is an excursus that provides Psellos with a perfect opportunity to pursue covertly one of his more important ambitions, an attack on established religion.⁹¹

Yet, while Psellos' own literary and rhetorical purposes may shape his appraisal of Basil's hegemony, I think it is worth drawing attention to some interesting and distinct parallels between Psellos' presentation of the reign and the emperor's own propaganda as it is articulated in the 996 Novel. For example, it is striking that it is Psellos, alone among historians of this period, who stresses the efforts made by the emperor to destroy the *parakoimomenos*' powerbase after his great-uncle had been removed from office. Moreover, his description of these efforts bears distinct parallels to the anti-*parakoimomenos* initiatives described by the 996 Novel:

... after casting back in his mind to the very beginning of his reign, from the moment when the *parakoimomenos* began to govern, the emperor then destroyed the measures that man had taken for his own security at that time. And of the things that had been done, as many as happened to contribute to his (the emperor's) welfare and that of the fisc, the emperor did not consider worth altering; but those he regarded as a morass of favours or honours, he tried to abrogate. The emperor asserted that he was aware of the former measures, but of the latter he was ignorant.⁹²

Nor is this the only instance where Psellos' text mimics the imperial voice of Basil II. Perhaps the most powerful piece of Basil propaganda is the famous depiction of the emperor as a warrior on the frontispiece to the psalter now in Venice. In this portrait Basil appears in full military dress, supported by the military saints, and receiving the submission of the tribute peoples, a visual composition that reflects a tenth-century interest in reviving the triumphal mili-

⁹¹ Kaldellis, *The Argument of Psellos's Chronographia*, 82–5.

⁹² Psellos, I, 12–13.

tary imagery of the emperors of late antiquity.⁹³ The fact that Basil chose to be buried at the church of St John the Evangelist at the Hebdomon palace, close to the imperial parade grounds, also illustrates the emperor's self-identification as a military figure.⁹⁴ This self-perception is reflected in the epitaph he commissioned for his tomb:

For none saw my spear lie still from the time when the emperor of the heavens called me great emperor autocrat of the earth, but I was wakeful through all the length of my life and guarded the children of the New Rome now campaigning manfully to the west setting up countless trophies throughout the land, now (campaigning) to the very borders of the east.⁹⁵

However, the more important point, is that this imperial imagery accords very closely with the portrait of Basil, the military emperor, found in Psellos' *Chronographia*.

He spent the greater part of his reign on campaign, keeping the raids of barbarians at bay, and guarding our frontiers He used to conduct campaigns against the barbarians, not according to the custom of most emperors, setting out in the middle of spring and returning at the end of summer. For him the point of return was when the undertaking that he had begun was complete. He hardened himself against the utmost cold and the height of the summer . . . truly in the face of all the demands of nature he was both obdurate and hard as adamantine.⁹⁶

As Kaldellis points out, Psellos' depiction of Basil the energetic warrior emperor draws on Hellenistic models of the ideal ruler.⁹⁷ Yet while this may be true, once again I wonder whether Psellos' text, for all its hidden messages and separate rhetorical and philosophical agendas, may also reflect the propaganda of terror issued over the course of many years by Basil II himself.⁹⁸

⁹³ A. Cutler, 'The Psalter of Basil II', in *Imagery and Ideology in Byzantine Art* (Aldershot, 1992), III (repr. from *Arte Veneta* 30 [1976], 9–19; 31 [1977], 9–15).

⁹⁴ Skylitzes, 369; Yahya, III, 481–2.

⁹⁵ S.G. Mercati, "Sull' Epigrafo di Basilio II Bulgaroctonos", *Collectanea Bizantina*, 2 vols. (Rome, 1970), I, 230; P. Stephenson, "The Legend of Basil the Bulgar-slayer", *BMGS* 24 (2000), 116. Translation by Jonathan Shepard.

⁹⁶ Psellos, I, 20–1.

⁹⁷ Kaldellis, *The Argument of Psellos's Chronographia*, 55.

⁹⁸ See in this volume Marc Lauxtermann (p. 4): he also believes that Psellos had access to imperial archives from the reign of Basil II when he was writing the *Chronographia*.

The revolt of Nikephoros Phokas and Nikephoros Xiphias

The discussion of Byzantine political authority in this paper has concentrated on the first half of the reign of Basil II. Analysis of the events and consequences of the Skleros and Phokas revolts has suggested that control over the army and thereby of 'foreign' policy was the touchstone of political power in later tenth-century Byzantium. While some great families were punished after the defeats of Phokas and Skleros, such oppression was not universal, partly because the empire continued to need the military expertise of experienced commanders, but mainly because great families and their private resources were not the central political problem in tenth-century Byzantium. That the emperor needed to control both the army and foreign policy to rule the state was a concept that Basil II grasped very early in his reign, but an achievement that he struggled to realise before 1000. Analysis of the Novel of 996 suggests that at the same time as attempting to secure control over military matters, the emperor tried to replace his great uncle, Basil the *parakoimomenos*, as the axial figure at court, in government, and in political society as a whole. Evidence from a variety of sources indicates that during the 980s and 990s both the rhetoric and the reality of Basil's reign were targeted at the same end: locating the emperor at the centre of the state—a gradual process that leaves traces in the account of the reign in Michael Psellos' *Chronographia*.

Unfortunately the lack of datable surviving evidence after 1000, makes it very difficult to prove empirically how or whether the emperor's rhetoric was realised in the second half of his reign. It is, for example, hard to know whether Basil II maintained his grip over the Byzantine army, and thereby over the state itself, through incessant warfare as both Psellos and Basil's own epitaph claim. Recent research has questioned whether Basil fought as actively as he alleged. For example, while Skylitzes argues that Basil led his armies into Bulgaria annually during the years before the annexation of 1018, Paul Stephenson has suggested that the emperor and Samuel, the tsar of the Bulgarians, reached a peaceful *modus vivendi* in 1005 which lasted for nearly a decade.⁹⁹ More research is clearly required before the

⁹⁹ Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, 66–71.

extent of Basil's campaigning in the Balkans can be resolved, although I am inclined to accept rather than reject Skylitzes' testimony. I suspect that Skylitzes' brief treatment of the Balkan wars between 1005 to 1014 is explained by the fact that he simply found the military details too tedious to record at length and with precision. His single-line reference to these campaigns, 'the emperor did not cease invading Bulgaria every year, cutting down and laying waste those things in his way', is a short summary rather than as Stephenson suggests an entirely fictional interpolation.¹⁰⁰

Nonetheless, I would like to conclude by suggesting that there is one episode which may help us gauge how Byzantine political society operated during the second half of Basil's reign. This is the unusually rich seam of evidence relating to the revolt of Nikephoros Phokas and Nikephoros Xiphias.¹⁰¹ This revolt broke out in Cappadocia in 1022, a mere four years after the emperor's triumphal annexation of Bulgaria.¹⁰² Basil himself was on campaign once again when the revolt occurred, this time against the princedom of Inner Iberia (Georgia), in the furthest reaches of modern-day north-east Turkey. All the narratives that cover these events, whether in Greek, Arabic, Georgian or Armenian, agree that this insurrection was extremely serious. Not only did the revolt involve large numbers of rebels within the empire, but the insurrectionists were widely believed to be in contact with forces outside the empire, including George prince of the Georgians and Abasgians, and possibly the Fatimid caliph, al-Hakim.¹⁰³

How should this internal political rupture at the very end of the reign be explained? As little more than a blip which signifies nothing in the wider context of Basil's long reign; or as the final failure of Basil's centralising rhetoric and the resurgence of the residual power of a provincial aristocracy whose authority rested on private resources of land and manpower in central Anatolia? As with the revolts of Skleros and Phokas at the beginning of Basil's reign, the causes of the revolt emerge when the many historical accounts that

¹⁰⁰ Skylitzes, 348.

¹⁰¹ See above pp. 40–41 for the widespread coverage that this revolt is accorded by medieval historians.

¹⁰² See also in this volume Cheynet pp. 7, 21, 25–27 for a more detailed account of this revolt.

¹⁰³ Aristakes of Lastivert, 17–22; Skylitzes, 366–7; Thomson, *Georgian Chronicles*, 283; Yahya, III, 463–7; Matt.Ed., 46–7.

cover the events of the revolt are aggregated and compared. These make it clear that rather than any resurgence of private magnate power, unrest was rooted in uncertainty about who was to succeed Basil II as emperor. It is important to remember that at the time of the revolt Basil was about sixty-six years old; his brother Constantine, sixty-three; Basil's nieces were unmarried and in their forties. There was no male heir.¹⁰⁴ In these circumstances the search for a new emperor had to begin. One important requisite was an imperial claim from the distant past. Yahya indicates that Nikephoros Phokas was chosen as the front man for his revolt precisely because: 'many Byzantines had a liking for Phokas and . . . their affection for his ancestors made him their choice'.¹⁰⁵ Among these ancestors of course was the emperor Nikephoros Phokas.¹⁰⁶ Other candidates for the imperial throne actively considered during the 1020s were the Argyros family because of their links with the incumbent dynasty. Three years after Basil's death Constantine VIII married his daughter Zoe to Romanos Argyros. As Yahya notes, 'The choice fell on Romanos on account of the closeness of kin between him and Constantine's ancestors: both their fathers were maternal cousins . . . [descended] from two sisters, the daughters of Romanos the Old (i.e. Lekapenos)'.¹⁰⁷

However, the immediate catalyst for the revolt of Phokas and Xiphias, that is to say the emperor's age, is less important for understanding how Byzantine political society operated during the second half of Basil's reign, than the identity of the chief protagonist of rebellion, the character that all the medieval historians claim was the *real* force behind the rebellion. That figure was not Nikephoros Phokas but Nikephoros Xiphias, one of Basil II's most successful generals during the Bulgarian wars, indeed the general whom John Skylitzes claims was responsible for the great Byzantine victory at Kleidion in 1014.¹⁰⁸ After the annexation of Bulgaria Xiphias had been transferred to the position of *strategos* of the Anatolikon. Xiphias's identity as a senior general is important because it indicates that the principal threat to imperial security within the Byzantine state at the

¹⁰⁴ See Cheynet in this volume pp. 31–2.

¹⁰⁵ Yahya, III, 465 (English translation: Feras Hamza, Wolfson College, Oxford).

¹⁰⁶ Texts celebrating the Phokas family remained popular throughout the eleventh century (see below in this volume Markopoulos).

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 486–7; English translation by Feras Hamza; see also in this volume Cheynet p. 18.

¹⁰⁸ Skylitzes, 348–9.

end of Basil's reign remained the same as that at the *beginning*, namely the army. Indeed Basil's own actions at the time of the revolt confirm the importance of retaining control over the army. For, while the revolt itself subsided quickly once Phokas had been killed, Basil had the head of the rebel brought from Cappadocia and paraded amid the imperial forces, so concerned was he that this insurrection might have eroded irreparably the loyalty and enthusiasm of the troops involved in the offensive against the Iberians Georgians.¹⁰⁹

Basil II's response to the Xiphias and Phokas revolt reflects the extent to which he remained alert throughout his reign to the fact that the army was the most important mainspring of political power in Byzantium, and thus the greatest potential danger to imperial security. And yet, while Basil correctly identified the army as the central tension in the relationship between the emperor and the rest of political society, his methods exacerbated rather than eliminated this problem. His military success, or at least his claims to military success, bound martial prowess ever more tightly to imperial legitimacy. At one level this meant that Basil himself was forced to plan campaigns until the very end of his reign. For no sooner were his wars with the Bulgars over in 1018, than he had found himself fighting the Iberians. Once the Iberians were defeated, he planned to invade Sicily. That later eleventh-century emperors felt the need to emulate or exceed Basil's martial achievements indicates both the power and the danger of the cocktail of imperial and military imagery he had concocted. For example, shortly after he took power, Romanos III proceeded to invade northern Syria despite his lack of military experience.¹¹⁰ Signs that Romanos was trying to compete with Basil's image emerge in his decision to assault Aleppo, a city Basil II had expressly considered too dangerous to attack and hold.¹¹¹ Finally, there is strong evidence that as the eleventh century progressed and various aristocratic families competed to replace the Macedonian dynasty after 1056, military competence and dynastic claims rooted in the reign of Basil II became closely entwined in the struggle for legitimacy. Several families promoted their imperial pretensions by direct reference to their ancestors' involvement in Basil II's wars.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 373.

¹¹⁰ Yahya, III, 495–501 (English translation: Feras Hamza.

¹¹¹ Farag, "The Aleppo Question", 53.

Most claimed strong affiliation to the emperor Basil II himself. Nikephoros Bryennios relates how John and Isaac Komnenos, the father and uncle of Alexios Komnenos (1081–1118), were entrusted as young boys into Basil's II tutelage by their father.¹¹² Michael Attaleiates' account of the ancestors of the emperor Nikephoros III Botaneiates (1078–81) goes much further. According to Attaleiates, Nikephoros' grandfather was single-handedly responsible for bringing Basil's Bulgarian campaigns to a successful conclusion. Meanwhile, Attaleiates alleges that Michael Botaneiates, Nikephoros III's father, who fought in both Bulgaria and Iberia, was regarded as the emperor Basil's son.¹¹³

Conclusion

At the beginning of this paper I asked to what extent Basil's reign should be interpreted as a watershed for Byzantium's political elite and its internal governance. I wanted to discover whether Basil's reign witnessed the transformation of a centrifugal polity typified by rebellious land-owning magnates to a more centripetal political society focused on the person of the emperor in Constantinople. The case presented in this paper is that such questions are misplaced, above all because the central tension within Byzantine political society in the later tenth century was not an estate-owning elite with large private resources of territory and manpower, but instead an army whose power had increased exponentially during the reigns of Basil's imperial predecessors. Revolts occurred at the beginning of Basil's reign, as a young emperor struggled to gain the upper hand over his generals in determining foreign policy and controlling the army. After the defeats of Phokas and Skleros, many rebels were punished, sometimes through the loss of estates, more usually through the loss of public office. However, the suppression of revolt did not lead to a fundamental revolution in the distribution of economic resources that underpinned political society, nor to a sudden change in those families who constituted the Byzantine aristocracy, nor to a fundamental reconstruction of relationships between emperor and elites.

¹¹² *Nīcephori Bryennii Historiarum Libri Quattuor*, ed. and trans. P. Gautier (Brussels, 1975), 75.

¹¹³ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, 1853), 229–36.

Those two medieval texts, which have often been cited as evidence for a profound shift in political authority within Byzantium in this period, the account of Michael Psellos and the Novel of 996, merely reflect a rhetoric of terror used by the emperor Basil in order to impress political society with the fact that he had replaced his great uncle, the *parakoimomenos*, at the helm of the ship of state. In these senses Basil II's reign is not one of revolution in internal governance nor of deep-seated changes in the identity and composition of the political elite; it is one of a sustained effort to maintain and strengthen the position of the emperor as the focal point of political action in Byzantium. The lack of revolution in the structures of Byzantine political society during Basil II's reign is reflected in the events of the Phokas-Xiphias revolt of 1021–2. Just as had been the case in 976–1000, control over the army was the central point of tension.

If I am correct in observing that Basil's reign witnessed relatively little structural change in the relationship between emperor and elite, then any future understanding of the internal history of the Byzantine empire during the later tenth and early eleventh centuries will entail adopting rather different approaches. Rather than searching for evidence to support a thesis of revolution in governance and elite relationships, we must look for the reality that gave Basil's rhetoric teeth in the eyes of his contemporaries. Why, how and to what extent were contemporaries persuaded by the articulation of terror? Why and how did this emperor rule for so long? Was the longevity of Basil's reign the result of the astute management of resources, material and ideological? Or can his survival be attributed to the lack of potent threats from outside the empire or his astute deployment of the techniques and strategies of Byzantine diplomacy? These are clearly questions for future research, but questions which will involve thinking about how Basil built upon edifices of power established earlier in the tenth century rather than looking for the incidence of sudden innovation.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ In this volume Jean Claude Cheynet argues that Basil II built on and accelerated practices inaugurated by his tenth-century imperial predecessors, particularly in his organisation of army units and his relations with the principalities of Caucasia.

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BASIL II AND ASIA MINOR

Jean-Claude Cheynet

With the Arab conquest of the empire's provinces further east, Asia Minor was to become the principal base of Byzantine power. It was the soldiers of the themes of Asia Minor who first held off the Muslims and then repulsed them with the aid of the *tagmata* in the pay of Constantinople. During the reigns of Nikephoros II Phokas and John I Tzimiskes, who had both made their way through the ranks of the eastern armies, the empire was the dominant force in the Near East, despite the regional pretensions of the Fatimids who had recently established themselves in Egypt and Syria. But the Empire had apparently reached its Eastern limits, even if certain adjustments might still be made. That one part of the eastern army shared this view is clear from the conduct of John Tzimiskes, who abstained from any real attempt to reconquer Palestine.¹ Military officers from Asia Minor had the ear of the government in Constantinople, particularly under Constantine VII and his son Romanos II.

In 976 power came once again into the hands of Basil the *parakoimomenos*. He knew Asia Minor well, for in his youth he had led imperial armies with success against the Arabs. Wary of Tzimiskes's former supporters, Basil now dismissed their chief, Bardas Skleros, though not without the latter's resistance. The government of the *parakoimomenos* lasted from 976 until 986, but in the final years his regency became less and less acceptable to the young emperor, who turned to Nikephoros Ouranos for counsel.² It is certain that Basil II himself considered that it was not he who exercised power during these years, for he called into question all decisions taken by the *parakoimomenos* before his fall. In 986, after the dismissal of the latter, the

¹ His famous letter to Ashot III, intended for the glorification of his campaign in Palestine, ought not to confuse the issue. In it he does not propose any programme of reconquest, but aims to consolidate his friendship amongst the Armenian élite, many of whom were employed in his service, such as Melias, whom he made domestikos of the *scholai* (Yahya, II, 353–4).

² On Basil, especially the last years of his power, cf. W.G. Brokkaar, "Basil Lacapenus", *Studia byzantina et neohellenica Neerlandica* 3 (1972), 199–234.

young Basil II, desiring to demonstrate his autonomy, launched an ill-fated offensive in Bulgaria, with the result that the officers of Asia Minor, feeling themselves neglected, followed their natural leaders, the Phokades, in an attempt to proclaim Bardas Phokas emperor. Their failure in 989 left Basil II more power than any of his predecessors had ever had,³ the more so because he chose to lead his armies in person—a novelty for the Macedonian dynasty, apart from a few inconclusive campaigns of his ancestor Basil I. Because of this decision Basil II was compared with his predecessors Nikephoros Phokas, whom the populace of Constantinople called ‘the Victorious’, and John Tzimiskes. Inasmuch as he had been their co-emperor, he must have already shared in their glory.

In order to measure the impact of Basil II’s policy in Asia Minor, the beginning of which should be dated to 989, we must first examine the economic situation of the eastern provinces and then the measures taken by the emperor in the economic and the military spheres, the diplomacy conducted by him with his neighbours and, finally, the men he chose to assist him in the government of the eastern themes and catepanate. The narrative sources are rather meagre. John Skylitzes devotes one of his longest chapters to Basil II, but in fact he treats only two principal points: the civil wars at the beginning of the reign and the Bulgarian campaigns, all the rest being dealt with in few paragraphs. Michael Psellos draws a portrait of the emperor rather than defining his policy. Fortunately, the Armenian, Arabic and Syriac sources are more informative on Basil’s activities in the east.

The economic situation in Asia Minor around the year 1000

No Byzantine archives have been preserved which might permit us to judge the state of the economy of the eastern provinces at the end of the tenth century, and few of the excavations of Anatolian cities have reached the levels of this period. This lack of informa-

³ See the apt remarks by M. Whittow, *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium* (London, 1996), 374–5. The great factions of the Anatolian aristocracy had been subjugated, whereas the so-called Macedonian faction, centred in Adrianople, which intervened several times in the course of the eleventh century in the struggle for imperial power, was still in the early stages of development.

tion explains the somewhat divergent opinions of modern historians. S. Vryonis, basing himself on the narrative sources, takes a rather optimistic view:⁴ for example, he describes Tzamandos as a city of considerable size because Skylitzes calls it *polyanthropos*,⁵ or cites Bar Hebraeus concerning the reconstruction of Tarsus, which supposedly recovered quickly and became very prosperous. A. Harvey is less optimistic, but also agrees that the region enjoyed growth.⁶ If one examines the chart of monastic foundations of the eleventh century drawn up by J. Darrouzès, one sees that the foundations in Asia Minor were less than half those of the west, or even of Constantinople taken alone.⁷ The conclusion that this half of the Empire was losing momentum would probably be misleading, for there were particular factors at work, such as the foundation of Athonite houses and the corresponding decline of Olympus in Bithynia. Moreover, the changes which affected the aristocracy of Asia Minor under Basil II were not favourable to new foundations. However, N. Thierry notes that in Cappadocia the hermitages and smaller monasteries of the tenth century give way in the following century to organised monasteries with a capacity often exceeding eight or ten monks.⁸ This remark does not contradict the decline of the great aristocracy of Asia Minor, since most of the known commanding officers belonged to lower ranks.

Lastly, the chart of Darrouzès, which takes into account only the creation of Chalcedonian monasteries, must be corrected by adding the many Jacobite foundations in the east.⁹ A part of the sums necessary for the construction of these Syriac monasteries came from immigrants and could be considered as a transfer of funds from

⁴ S. Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, 1971), 14–24.

⁵ Skylitzes, 319.

⁶ A. Harvey, *Economic Expansion in the Byzantine Empire 900–1200* (Cambridge, 1989), 208–11.

⁷ J. Darrouzès, “Le mouvement des fondations monastiques au XI^e siècle”, *TM* 6 (1976), 159–76.

⁸ N. Thierry, “Le provincialisme cappadocien”, in S. Lampakis (ed.) *Byzantine Asia Minor (6th–12th cent.)* (Athens, 1998), 408.

⁹ G. Dagron, “Minorités ethniques et religieuses dans l’Orient byzantin à la fin du X^e et au XI^e siècle: l’immigration syrienne”, *TM* 6 (1976), 177–216. The *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian and the *Chronicon ecclesiasticon* of Bar Hebraeus allow us to reconstruct the history of several monasteries: those of Sergisyyeh, Barid, Cursor and Bar Gagāi (which was also a great intellectual centre). They all prospered in the half century following the reign of Nikephorus Phokas (*ibid.*, 189–92).

Islamic to Byzantine lands. One would also need data concerning urban churches, but this is lacking, except in the case of the reconstruction (?) of the church of Kassianos, the cathedral of Antioch.¹⁰

As we have said, the archaeology of Anatolia has not been well studied for the medieval period, though the few excavations and surveys that have been carried out, for example by C. Foss, suggest the same tendency: that of recovery after the shock of the invasions. It is difficult to isolate precisely the reign of Basil II in this context, probably because it marks no particular occurrence. There is every evidence that before the arrival of the Turks Asia Minor was in a prospering state, even if certain regions, such as Pamphylia,¹¹ had not regained the same level of population and wealth they had enjoyed in Late Antiquity. But others, such as Bithynia, at least judging by variations of the level of the lake of Nicaea, had recovered more completely.¹² The growth of Constantinople, the restoration of peace and the speedy return to monetary transactions and payment of taxes¹³ suffice to explain the quicker pace of this recovery. At Ankara in the tenth to eleventh centuries the city outgrew the walls of the citadel.¹⁴ The region of Strobilos appears to have been rich right up to the eve of the Turkish invasion.¹⁵ Amorion recovered from the disaster of 838, and not only the upper part of the city but also the lower was reoccupied in the tenth and eleventh centuries. New constructions were in places put up against the old walls,

¹⁰ Yahya, II, 445; the translation uses the expression 'remise en ordre' of this church after the model of St Sophia. Since Basil had restored this building which had been damaged by an earthquake, one supposes a restoration, but this could also be understood as the re-organisation of the church's property after the model of St Sophia.

¹¹ C. Foss, "The Cities of Pamphylia in the Byzantine Age", in his *Cities, Fortresses and Villages of Byzantine Asia Minor* (Aldershot, 1996), no. IV, 1–62.

¹² B. Geyer, R. Dalongeville, J. Lefort, "Les niveaux du lac de Nicée au Moyen Âge", *Castrum* 7 (forthcoming). The authors have studied the variations in the level of the lake. When this latter was high, it was because the drainage canal was no longer maintained, indicating a low population. Conversely, a low level of water in the lake is an indication of more intensive agricultural activity. Such was the case during the reign of Basil II.

¹³ N. Oikonomides, "Σε ποιά βαθμό ήταν εκρηματισμένη η μεσοβυζαντινή οικονομία;", *Ροδονιά. Τιμή στον Μ.Ι. Μανούσκα* (Rethymno, 1994), 363–70.

¹⁴ C. Foss, "Late Antique and Byzantine Ankara", *DOP* 31 (1977), 84, repr. in his *History and Archaeology of Byzantine Asia Minor* (Aldershot, 1990), no. VI.

¹⁵ C. Foss, "Strobilos and Related Sites", *Anatolian Studies* 38 (1988), 147–74, repr. in his *History and Archaeology*, no. XII.

proof of the sense of security which prevailed amongst the population of the time.¹⁶

After the reconquest Asia Minor was divided clearly into three parts, each with distinctive characteristics. Firstly, western Asia Minor, which had long enjoyed security, scarcely troubled by the odd pirate raid,¹⁷ supplied abundant wealth, in particular provisions for the capital, and possessed many active ports (the Marmara coasts, Smyrna, Ephesus, Strobilos). It comprised the fertile soils of the theme of Thrakesion and of Bithynia, as well as the coastal plains of Trebizond and of Attaleia, geographically distant but with closely similar economic structures.¹⁸ Secondly, there was the central plateau and its Paphlagonian and Tauric borders, a rough land of stock-breeding, nearly devoid of large cities. Such cities as there were, Caesarea for example, where a few great families resided, or Ikonion, were little more than centres of garrisons or administrative headquarters which sustained markets only at a local level, while the land supplied men and officers for the army. Finally, the reconquered lands comprised fertile plains,¹⁹ including Cilicia, and the vibrant commercial cities of Theodosiopolis/Artze, Melitene, Tarsus, Antioch, and Laodicea, to which were later added Edessa and Ani.

The limited impact of the civil wars

Asia Minor was involved in two civil wars, that of 976–979, in which the imperial army confronted that of Bardas Skleros, and that of 986–989, which saw the final defeat of Phokas. This latter episode could not have had any adverse effect on the Anatolian economy

¹⁶ C.S. Lightfoot, "The Public and Domestic Architecture of a Thematic Capital: the Archeological Evidence from Amorion", *Byzantine Asia Minor*, 306–7.

¹⁷ Jews of Mastaura fell victim to such a raid sometime after 1022: T. Reinach, "Un contrat de mariage du temps de Basile le Bulgaroctone", *Mélanges G. Schlumberger* (Paris, 1924), 118–32; D. Jacoby, "What do we learn about Byzantine Asia Minor from the documents of the Cairo Genizah?", *Byzantine Asia Minor*, ed. Lampakis, 84–7.

¹⁸ The two cities were very active ports, even if the details given by Ibn Hauqal concerning the amount of *kommerkion*, 300 pounds for Attaleia and 1000 for Trebizond, cannot be verified: Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy c. 300–1450* (Cambridge, 1985), 174.

¹⁹ Some of the medieval mines that have been identified were in these provinces or near them: B. Pitarakis, "Mines anatoliennes exploitées par les Byzantins: recherches récentes", *Revue numismatique*, 153 (1998), 141–85.

because the region rallied almost unanimously to the cause of the chief of the rebels, Bardas Phokas, and was therefore not the theatre of confrontation. The loss of life was probably quite limited. The earlier conflict had been more fiercely fought, involving a number of bloody battles in eastern and central Asia Minor, which presupposes the considerable movement of troops and all the concomitant damage. But again, it is clear that there were no long lasting consequences and all was set right in the course of a few years. The chroniclers mention no catastrophe such as famine or epidemic at this time.

The greater role of the central power

After 989 Basil II was free to pursue his policy of centralisation. He had at his disposition the formidable arm of the tax system which, by making the 'powerful' interdependent with the 'weak,' allowed him to reduce the estates of the former through 'legal' confiscation, undoubtedly less severe than that normally practised after rebellions but which nevertheless constituted a real threat to rich land owners.²⁰ In fact, this probably had little effect on the prosperous parts of Asia Minor, for the crown, the tax authorities and Constantinopolitan institutions were already in a position of strength there through the services of numerous civil servants. Amongst these latter were the *xenodochoi*, all of them installed in this part of Asia Minor, the *hōrreiaroi*,²¹ the curators, especially those responsible for the management of estates in the fertile valley of the Meander, the Optimaton, Nicaea, Pegai, Doryleum, Lampe, Mesanykta. In these latter cities

²⁰ This does not mean that Basil frequently resorted to this measure, for his reign did not reverse the basic tendency of the prevalence of private or public domain over the rural commune.

²¹ Most of the *hōrreiaroi* are attested, generally on seals, in this part of Asia Minor: Paphos, Smyrna, Chios (?), Pege, Panormos, Kios, Nicomedia, Amastris, Aminos. Cf. J.-Cl. Cheynet, "Un aspect du ravitaillement de Constantinople aux X^e/XI^e siècles d'après quelques sceaux d'*hōrreiaroi*", *SBS* 6, 1-26. To this list, which remains provisional owing to the publication of new seals, we must add the seal of a *hōrreiaros* of Kinosles, a port of Paphlagonia situated between Ionopolis and Sinope (seal of the Archeological Museum of Istanbul). The dates of these seals confirm that these granaries were operating during Basil's reign.

it is possible that the *episkeptitai* worked together with the *aplekta* where the armies gathered before departing on campaign.²²

On the other hand, the civil wars did bring about a marked change in the distribution of great estates on the plateau as a result of massive confiscations.²³ This can be shown in the case of the Phokades, the Maleinoi and the grandchildren of the *magistros* Romanos Moseles,²⁴ though the rôle played by these latter in the civil wars is not known.²⁵ It appears that the Skleroi were also affected by these measures, for Basil II installed the aged Bardas in the region of Didymoteichos; but the family had preserved, or regained, its position in the east, since the great-grandson of Bardas, Romanos, possessed estates in the theme of the Anatolikoi under Monomachos.²⁶ These measures were taken also against dependents of the great generals, thus making a great deal of land available. It is difficult to trace these changes

²² On the *episkeptitai* and curators, cf. J.-Cl. Cheynet, "Épiskeptitai et autres gestionnaires des biens publics", to appear in *SBS* 7 (on the basis of seals of the Institut Français d'Études Byzantines). For example, it was at Mesanykta that the *protoves-tiarios* Leo established himself and his army for the operation against Bardas Skleros, and where he negotiated the return of certain of the rebel's lieutenants (Skylitzes, 320). Such an evolution made useless any direct link of the soldier with the land.

²³ On the changes which occurred under Basil II and his successors, cf. J. Howard-Johnston, "Crown Lands and the Defence of Imperial Authority in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries", *BF* 21 (1995), 75–100.

²⁴ Scholia to a Novel of Basil II dated to 996 concern precisely these three families: N. Svoronos, *Les nouvelles des empereurs macédoniens concernant la terre et les stratiotes. Introduction—édition—commentaires*, posthumous edition by P. Gounaridis (Athens, 1994), 203, 207.

²⁵ It should be remembered that the Moselai, of Armenian origin, had belonged to the highest ranks of the aristocracy since the end of the eighth century and were amongst the supporters of Romanos I Lekapenos—the *magistros* Romanos Moseles was his grandson (Skylitzes, 251)—and probably also amongst those of John Tzimiskes, an emperor close to the Armenians: A.P. Kazhdan, *Armjane v sostave gosподstvujščego klassa vizantijskoj imperii v XI–XII vv.* (Erevan, 1975), 10–11. Romanos, the grandson of Lekapenos and *magistros* under Romanos II (his first cousin), was thus one of the highest dignitaries in the state. We know nothing of his activities, except that Constantine VII, at the beginning of his personal reign, had sent him to inspect the theme of Opsikion (Theoph. Cont., 443). His grandsons were targeted probably because of the extent of their wealth, a good part of which must have come from public lands granted by Romanos I Lekapenos to his descendants. This confiscation suggests that Basil carried out a policy of systematic recuperation of estates granted by his predecessors. The *parakoimomenos* Basil was the first victim.

²⁶ It is impossible to determine whether Romanos had inherited these lands from his ancestors or had been the beneficiary of a recent grant—or restitution—on the part of Monomachos, his sister's lover: W. Seibt, *Die Skleroi. Eine prosopographisch-sigillographische Studie*, *Byzantina Vindobonensia* 9 (Vienna, 1976), 76–85.

in detail. A number of *episkepseis* which first make their appearance in the eleventh century may have been created on estates that had been thus confiscated: for example that of Podandos²⁷ and above all Rodandos,²⁸ the city where Nikephoros Phokas had revolted and raised troops against Basil II in 1022 and which was probably at the centre of the last estates left to the Phokades.²⁹ One must not forget that Basil II probably also inherited a part of the immense property of John Tzimiskes, who had died childless, whereby he would have obtained lands in the theme of the Armeniakon, of which the Dalassenoi were to derive partial benefit.³⁰

Basil II must also have reclaimed numerous estates in the provinces which had been recently reconquered, for the generals belonging to the great families mentioned above had surely taken advantage of their successes. Moreover, it was in this part of Asia Minor, particularly in Cilicia, that the *parakoimomenos* Basil had amassed the great wealth seized by Basil II after his mentor's downfall. This would explain the origin of the *episkepsis* of Longinas. Situated in a fertile plain near Tarsus, this city was in the possession of the *parakoimomenos* Basil, a fact which angered John Tzimiskes when he learned of it whilst passing through the region. The city remained an important point on the route from Syria in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

Thus the emperor had at his disposal also in this part of the empire considerable means of increasing the direct influence of the central power. This development can be traced through the mention of numerous civil servants who exercised authority in the region. There is no doubt that many of them came originally from Constantinople and that they derived profit from the exercise of these functions. Of course, the emperor left the posts of second rank to the indigenous population, as had always been imperial tradition, and this practice prevailed both in provinces peopled by foreigners and those inhabited by Greeks. On the other hand, the reign of Basil II

²⁷ G. Schlumberger, *Sigillographie de l'Empire byzantin* (Paris, 1884), 315: seal of Epiphanius Ka . . . , *episkeptites* of P. (11th c.).

²⁸ Three seals of *episkeptitai* of Rodandos have come down to us: *Catalogue of the Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art*, IV, ed. E. McGeer, J. Nesbitt, N. Oikonomides (Washington, DC, 2001), nos 46.1–3.

²⁹ Skylitzes, 366.

³⁰ Leo Diac., 99, affirms that Tzimiskes, the heir of Kourkouas, distributed his wealth to peasants and charitable establishments, but part of it must have also been paid into the state treasury.

appears to have seen the end of the nomination of indigenous peoples to the most important posts.³¹

Even posts of importance in the Church in the east, as for example at Antioch, occupied Basil II's attention. During a visit there in 995, he demanded the resignation of the Patriarch Agapios, formerly bishop of Aleppo, whom he had exiled for having supported Bardas Phokas,³² and replaced him, in 996, with a *chartophylax* of St Sophia who must have been young since he remained patriarch for nearly twenty-five years.³³ His successor, Nicholas, appointed after a vacancy of several years, came also from Constantinople, where he had been abbot of Stoudios. The latter was certainly a faithful servant of the emperor, who had a strong attachment to the Stoudios monastery: he promoted the next abbot, Alexios, as patriarch of Constantinople several months after sending Nicholas to Antioch.³⁴

Thus Basil further strengthened his popularity in the capital, which had already supported him in the perilous times of the great rebellions, whereas his predecessor, Nikephoros Phokas, had failed to rally the people of Constantinople. This is probably the explanation for the populace's attachment to the Macedonian dynasty when Basil's nieces held power.

An efficient tax system based on economic prosperity

The reconquered regions were amongst the most densely populated of the empire in that they were highly urbanised. The military operations during the time of Nikephoros Phokas had probably caused

³¹ Cf. most recently Catherine Holmes, "How the East was won in the reign of Basil II", in A. Eastmond (ed.), *Eastern Approaches to Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2001), 41–56.

³² The affair is obscure, for according to Yahya, II, 425, 428, himself, Agapios had been expelled from Antioch by Leo, the son of Bardas Phokas, who was then in revolt. Perhaps it was all a ruse to deceive the partisans of the emperor.

³³ Yahya, II, 445. It was also Basil who, several months earlier, had personally chosen a former layman, the *magistros* Sisinnios, as patriarch of Constantinople after having left the post vacant for a number of years (Skylitzes, 340).

³⁴ Skylitzes, 368–9. It was also in this monastery that Basil had placed the young sons of Manuel Komnenos, Isaac and John, then orphans, for the completion of their education: Nikephoros Bryennios, *Histoire*, ed. and trans. P. Gautier, CFHB 9 (Brussels, 1975), 77. Finally, several days before his death, Basil showed his attachment to St John Stoudios by summoning the abbot (Skylitzes, 369).

considerable destruction, albeit in limited areas, as well as a demographic decline through the flight of one part of the population and enslavement of another; but the economic and demographic recovery was rapid, aided by the influx of Jacobite and Armenian immigrants.³⁵ This process continued during the reign of Basil II.³⁶ We do not know how many inhabitants Antioch had, but its population must certainly have been many tens of thousands strong. Melitene, formerly the capital of an emirate and an active commercial centre, probably had a smaller population but one which nevertheless numbered in the tens of thousands.

Merchants and craftsmen were quite active. In Antioch silks³⁷ and luxury textiles were in abundance and of high quality. In 1078 Isaac Komnenos, then *doux* of Antioch, returned to the capital with Syrian textiles for the emperor Nikephoros III Botaneiates, who had formerly been *doux* of Antioch and was a great admirer of these cloths.³⁸ Exchanges with the emirate of Aleppo had been regulated since the treaty of 961, and in December 981 Bardas Phokas managed to impose a tribute amounting to twenty thousand dinars or the near equivalent in *nomismata*.³⁹ In principle a Byzantine official supervised transactions at Aleppo and collected the tribute. But since no seal belonging to any commercial official of Aleppo/Berroia has yet been discovered, it is supposed that the commercial official of Antioch, who is well attested,⁴⁰ was charged with this task. It would appear

³⁵ Dagron, "Minorités ethniques", 193–6. It appears that Jews of Egypt emigrated as well: Jacoby, "Genizah?", 87.

³⁶ Mich.Syr., 145–6. 'Parmi eux (people from Takrit in Djezire) étaient ces hommes célèbres qui vinrent à Mélitène, les Benê Abou 'Imrân . . . Ils dépensèrent toute leur fortune pour la construction des églises et des monastères'. One year, the emperor imposed on them 'la charge de frapper les dariques de l'empire pendant toute une année, et vit que leur fortune n'avait pas diminué'. On another occasion, the emperor lacked money when he was in the land of Goubbos, returning from Armenia: 'l'empereur se leva la nuit et vint à leur porte leur demander un emprunt, quand ils le reconnurent, ils se prosternèrent, le vénèrent et lui donnèrent cent kenténaria d'or, ce qu'il avait demandé'. Though we need not accept all the details of these anecdotes, they give us a good idea of the newcomers.

³⁷ On the production of silk in Northern Syria, cf. the references gathered by D. Jacoby, "Silk crosses the Mediterranean", *Le vie del Mediterraneo. Idee, uomini, oggetti (secoli XI–XVII)* (Genova, April 1994), ed. G. Airal di (Genoa, 1997), 63–4.

³⁸ Bryennios, ed. Gautier, 299.

³⁹ Yahya, II, 407. Several years earlier imperial troops and those of Bardas Skleros opposed one another in the hope of seizing the annual tribute of the city of Aleppo which the Saracens were transporting to Constantinople (Skylitzes, 321).

⁴⁰ To date we know of three of them: Romanos Eugeneianos, *protospatharios* and

that the inhabitants of Antioch conducted their own trade with Syria and Egypt, as Basil II, annoyed by the installation of a Fatimid garrison in Aleppo, forbade any commercial travel between the empire and these countries. An exemption was made, on demand, for Manṣūr ibn Lu'lu, the former ruler of Aleppo, who had taken refuge in Byzantine territory in Antioch.⁴¹ The following year, the Fatimid governor of Aleppo, 'Aziz al-Daula, obtained permission from Basil to trade with the empire and benefited thereby.⁴² We have proof of the importation of merchandise by Greeks from Fatimid Syria: the wreck of Serçe Limani, discovered to the north of Rhodes and dated to the third decade of the eleventh century, contained Muslim glass and pottery, in particular from Tyre and sixteen glass coin weights based on Fatimid standards weight,⁴³ Aleppo developed considerably in the tenth and eleventh centuries, so much so that it was necessary to construct new districts outside the walls. This urban development must be seen in connection with a rise in commerce for the ports of Northern Syria lay at the end of the principal trade route to the Mediterranean.⁴⁴

The affairs of the imperial treasury appear to have been entrusted to a *basilikos*, at least in the beginning, for we know the names of two of them, Koulaïb and K.n.t.tich.⁴⁵ The extent of the emperor's property is unknown, but there is every indication that it was quite considerable. Basil II was able to grant Manṣūr ibn Lu'lu a building within the walls of Antioch as well as a village in the Ġabal Laylūn.⁴⁶

After the reign of Basil we find no more mention of a *basilikos* at Antioch. We cannot assume that the function was abolished, for references to this office become rare in other themes as well. However,

kommerkiarios of A... (Schlumberger, *Sigillographie*, 312); John Eugenianos, *thesmographos*, *kommerkiarios* of A... (ex-coll. Zarnitz 354 and Zacos BNF 654); N. *hypatos* and *kommerkiarios* of Antioch: K.M. Konstantopoulos, *Βυζαντιακά μολυβδόβουλλα: Ἡ συλλογὴ Ἀναστασίου Κ.Π. Σταμούλη* (Athens, 1930), no. 74.

⁴¹ Yahya, III, 400.

⁴² Yahya, III, 404.

⁴³ F.H. Van Doorninck Jr., "The Medieval Shipwreck at Serçe Limani: An Early 11th-Century Fatimid-Byzantine Commercial Voyage", *Graecoarabica* 4 (1991), 45–50.

⁴⁴ Bianquis, *Damas et la Syrie*, 533–4. In 1041, the treasure of the Fatimid governor in the citadel of Aleppo amounted to 275,000 dinars (*ibid.*, 555).

⁴⁵ The name is transcribed in this form by Yahya, II, 373. The first part might represent a name beginning with Konto-.

⁴⁶ Yahya, III, 402.

we note the office of *kurator* of Antioch attested on a number of seals. Amongst these latter, one of John *spatharokandidatos* could date from the reign of Basil II.⁴⁷ In the course of the century, the *kourator* of Antioch added the qualification 'grand' to his title, which suggests that the office was more important than other provincial curatorships and resembled that of the Mangana.⁴⁸ In the Early Byzantine period there were great imperial estates at Antioch, such as those of Hormisdas.⁴⁹ No continuity of public estates of the same lands can be assumed over such a long period, but K. Todt has gathered references which prove that under Muslim sovereignty the region still comprised great public or Caliphal estates.⁵⁰

The army of Asia Minor

Basil inherited an army perfected during the tenth century by the Phokades, Bardas and then, especially, his son Nikephoros, whereas John Tzimiskes simply reaped the fruit of his predecessors' efforts. This army was an amalgam of indigenous troops and foreign contingents. The Byzantine army had probably increased its forces in the two previous centuries,⁵¹ to such an extent that it had lost its unity: the troops of the west had adopted military traditions divergent from those of the east, for the simple reason that they confronted adversaries of a different nature.⁵² Romanos II, no doubt on the advice of Nikephoros and Leo Phokas, had taken note of this

⁴⁷ G. Zacos, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, compiled by J.W. Nesbitt (Bern, 1985), no. 527. The editors have not given a date, but the epigraphical characteristics and the modesty of the rank granted to John would suggest the turn of the tenth century.

⁴⁸ Himerios (?) Solomon, *protospatharios* and grand curator of Antioch: J.-C. Cheyner, *Sceaux de la Collection Zacos* (Paris, 2001), no. 8.

⁴⁹ On these estates, see in particular D. Feissel, "Magnus, Mégas et les curateurs des 'maisons divines'", *TM* 9 (1985), 465–76.

⁵⁰ K.-P. Todt, *Region und griechisch-orthodoxes Patriarchat von Antiocheia in mittelbyzantinischer Zeit und im Zeitalter der Kreuzzüge (969–1204)*, typewritten thesis (Wiesbaden, 1998), 386–7.

⁵¹ Without accepting the thesis of W. Treadgold (*Byzantium and its Army, 284–1081*, [Stanford CA, 1995], 85) that the army under Basil II had reached the fanciful number of 247,800 soldiers, it is nevertheless certain that the number of soldiers of the *tagmata* was increased appreciably, from the tenth century, by the recruitment of diverse nationalities in addition to the four traditional *tagmata*.

⁵² G. Dagron and H. Mihăescu, *Le traité sur la guérilla de l'empereur Nicéphore Phocas* (Paris, 1986), 255.

increasing divergence and had divided the supreme command by creating two *domestiko* of the *scholai*, one of the west and one of the east, a reform with the double advantage of taking into account the specificity of fronts as well as diminishing the power of the holders of these offices. Despite these precautions, the army of the east had imposed its candidate upon the empire in 963 and nearly managed to do the same in 986–989. Basil II had thus to resolve a delicate problem: to regain lasting control of the troops of the east without endangering the security of Asia Minor.

Basil succeeded by means of several measures which we shall examine. First of all, the emperor was in a very good situation in the east because the Abbasid Caliphate, then controlled by emirs of the Buyid emirate, was weakened to the point that the emirs of Mesopotamian lands looked to Byzantium for alliances. The emirs of Aleppo had not recovered from the blows dealt them by Nikephoros Phokas and their aspirations for independence represented no great threat, especially as the city was the object of dispute amongst the successors of the Hamdanids, the Bedouin and the Fatimids. As for these latter, who had once seemed ready to reconquer lost Muslim positions, they had now lost all ambition.

As we shall see, Basil II carefully selected his officers in order to eliminate both those who had too much influence in the army or had been too close to the Phokades, without however dispensing altogether with the services of the aristocracy in general.⁵³ But what is more significant is that he reduced the importance of the thematic troops in favour of foreign contingents. This manoeuvre was not a novel one, for it appears that the troops of themes situated to the west of Asia Minor had been little used against the Hamdanids. However, the theme of the Thrakesion had participated, under its *strategos* Pastilas, in the reconquest of Crete in 961.⁵⁴ In 949, the theme of the Thrakesion numbered only 1550 men, of whom 600 were Armenians charged with the defence of the coast. From this information N. Oikonomides deduced, quite rightly, that one third or even half of the soldiers had been transformed into *paroikoi* because the system of great estates was further developed in this very rich

⁵³ Cheynet, *Pouvoir*, 335; C. Sifonas, "Basile II et l'aristocratie byzantine", *Byzantion* 64 (1994), 118–133.

⁵⁴ Leo Diac., 8. These troops were not terribly well trained, for they allowed themselves to be caught in an ambush by the Muslims.

theme.⁵⁵ In other words, in western Asia Minor the thematic system had already become moribund, though without any general slackening of the force of the contemporary Byzantine army.

Troops of themes situated further to the east, the Anatolikon, Kapadocia, Seleucia, Charsianon, were regularly levied, even if the quality of many of the soldiers thus obtained was mediocre.⁵⁶ With Basil the tendency toward the 'tagmatisation' of the themes was probably accelerated. In any case, this process was already complete when, under Michael IV, contingents of the themes of the east took part in long campaigns in southern Italy. It is thus that one can explain John Chaldos's title in the sources as 'doux of Thessalonica';⁵⁷ from another document we learn his complete title: *doux* of the Armeniakon, the Boukellarion and Thessalonica.⁵⁸ As was remarked long ago, this title implies that John Chaldos carried out his mission with the aid of contingents of the themes of the Armeniakon and the Boukellarion for as long as the emperor judged necessary. These troops were far removed from their homes for several years, as were the *tagmata*. In the case of Chaldos, it was the Bulgarians who put an end to his mission by capturing him two years after his nomination and keeping him in prison for twenty-two years.

It seems certain that Basil II diminished the overall importance of the army of the east, which was apparently no longer able to carry on a campaign by itself.⁵⁹ At Antioch, the army of the duchy, composed of *tagmata*, appears to have been increased in comparison with traditional thematic armies, and it was judged capable of repulsing Fatimid armies by itself. But we know of two cases of defeat of the *doux* of Antioch, of Michael Bourtzes and of Damian Dalassenos, resulting in several thousand dead and captured. When the emperor wanted to intervene in force in the east, he was obliged to wait for

⁵⁵ N. Oikonomides, "The Social Structure of The Byzantine Countryside in the Xth Century", *Σύμμεκτα* 10 (1996), 124–5.

⁵⁶ Dagron, *Guérilla*, 280–287.

⁵⁷ Skylitzes, 347.

⁵⁸ *Actes d'Iviron I, Des origines au milieu du XI^e siècle*, ed. J. Lefort, N. Oikonomidès, Denise Papachryssanthou, Hélène Métrévélí, Archives de l'Athos 14 (Paris, 1985), no. 8.

⁵⁹ One of the first to bring attention to this point was J.V.A. Fine, "Basil II and the Decline of the Theme System", *Studia Slavico-byzantina et Medievalia Europensia I, in memoriam Dujcev* (Sofia, 1988), 44–7. Cf. also more generally J.-Cl. Cheynet, "La politique militaire byzantine de Basile II à Alexis Comnène", *ΣΡVI* 29–30 (1991), 61–74.

peace on the Bulgarian border, in order to raise the necessary élite troops.

One *tagma*, that of the Immortals, appears to have been dissolved by Basil. The explanation for this may well be political rather than military. This contingent, created by John Tzimiskes from the best troops of his entourage—thus men from Asia Minor—was perhaps too tied up with the eastern aristocracy which had rebelled against Basil. Moreover, since the thematic armies of the East were mobilised to a lesser extent and probably already reduced only to their most useful part, the élite soldiers or *epilektoi* of the *Treatise on Guerilla Warfare* (*De velitatione*), the Byzantine army increased its contingents of foreigners, especially since the state coffers were now well filled through direct exploitation of numerous estates. It would even appear that Basil II purposely limited the numbers to a level he desired. Indeed, he left the treasury full,⁶⁰ even though he had not reclaimed arrears in taxes, whereas his brother Constantine required that these be paid straightway at the beginning of his reign. One might consider this accumulation of wealth the result of excessive rigour or harsh confiscations, however I see no proof for these hypotheses.⁶¹ Whatever the reason, the constitution of this enormous reserve shows that the emperor could have raised more troops, and that the number of soldiers depended on his own choice.

The motley character of the troops placed in the field against the Arabs did not escape the latter's notice. Here again, Basil II did not innovate, but simply made greater use than before of Rus, whose country was now ruled by a Christian prince, and of Armenians. The former saved the throne for him in the struggle with Phokas, and contributed greatly to the success of the Bulgarian campaigns. Basil II took them with him when he took arms against the Muslims in 999, when the Varangians burnt St Constantine of Homs,⁶² and again when he fought against various Georgian princes, David the

⁶⁰ He supposedly accumulated 200,000 talents, that is, the same number of pounds in gold or 14.4 million *nomismata* (Psellos, I, 19). This sum is hardly credible, considering the empire's resources; it would presuppose that the emperor had amassed several years' taxes, which would have led to great deflation, unless we assume that the Byzantine economy was much more highly developed and that the circulation of money was much greater than has been thought.

⁶¹ The population of Constantinople never blamed Basil, whereas it had considered the fiscal exactions of Nikephoros Phokas a crushing burden.

⁶² Yahya, II, 458.

kouropalates, and then George of Abasgia.⁶³ Under Basil the Varangians performed the function of the emperor's body-guard. The choice of loyal soldiers to make up a *tagma* devoted solely to the person of the emperor was an old tradition going back to Isaurian times.

Basil II made greater use than his predecessors of Armenian combatants. Armenian troops had long been in service to the Empire, but their reputation was suspect, especially under Nikephoros Phokas.⁶⁴ Armenians had zealously supported Bardas Skleros in his struggle against the *parakoimomenos* Basil.⁶⁵ In 986, Basil II was apparently saved from a disastrous campaign against the Bulgarians by his Armenian infantry.⁶⁶ Under Basil the Armenians constituted an important part of the garrison in the duchy of Antioch, where they had perhaps already been installed under John Tzimiskes.⁶⁷ In 994 Armenian nobles fell in the battle which ended in the defeat of Michael Bourtzes.⁶⁸ Several years earlier, in 991, the latter had come to the aid of the emir of Aleppo, Sa'ad ad-Daula, with Greeks and Armenians in his command.⁶⁹ Basil established Armenian garrisons at Antarados and Shaizar.⁷⁰ The Armenians were accompanied by their families, and the Armenian communities was so numerous in several cities of Cilicia and the duchy of Antioch that bishoprics were created for them, at Tarsus and Antioch. Once again, the emperor

⁶³ Aristakes of Lastivert, *Récit des malheurs de la nation arménienne*, French trans. with introduction and commentary by M. Canard and H. Berbérian from the edition and Russian translation of K. Yuzbashian, Bibliothèque de *Byzantion* 5 (Brussels, 1973) (hereafter Aristakes of Lastivert), 4: a quarrel broke out between the Rus in the Byzantine army and a group of Azat (nobles) of Tayk. Thirty of the latter perished.

⁶⁴ On Nikephoros's decree concerning Armenian soldiers, cf. E. McGeer, "The Legal decree of Nikephoros II Phokas concerning Armenian Stratiotai", in T.S. Miller and J. Nesbitt (eds.), *Peace and War in Byzantium. Essays in Honor of George T. Dennis* (Washington, DC, 1995), 123–37.

⁶⁵ The *strategos* Isaac Brachamios pressed Bardas Skleros, who was still undecided, to provoke the first general confrontation in which imperial forces were defeated. The Armenians were still in the advance-guard of the rebels, under the command of Michael Bourtzes, at the time of another battle. Defeated, they were mercilessly massacred, whereas the 'Romans' were spared (Skylitzes, 318–19, 321).

⁶⁶ Stephen Asolik of Taron, *Histoire Universelle*, trans. F. Macler (Paris, 1917), 127.

⁶⁷ Michael the Syrian affirms that Armenian emigration in Syria took place 'in the time of the emperor Basil': Mich.Syr., 187.

⁶⁸ Asolik of Taron, trans. Macler, 199–200.

⁶⁹ T. Bianquis, *Damas et la Syrie sous la domination fâtimide (359–468/969–1076)*, I (Damascus, 1986), 180–81.

⁷⁰ Yahya, II, 443, 458. The list was certainly much longer, but we have information concerning these two cities only.

created a precedent, and the Armenians came to occupy a permanent and important place in the very important duchy of Antioch.

Basil neglected no opportunity which came his way. In 1016, the emperor commanded the catepan of Antioch to receive with honour Manṣūr ibn Lu'lu who had been expelled from Aleppo by the Mir-dassids. Mansur and his men, enrolled in the catepanate, received pay and constituted a *tagma* of seven hundred men.⁷¹ This is perhaps the beginning of the *tagma* of Saracens known from exemption lists between 1060 and 1088.⁷² Basil was accompanied by Bulgarian troops even before the country had been completely conquered by him, for in 995 Bulgarian elements of his army captured a number of Bedouin.⁷³ At Basil's death, the army of the east was composed almost exclusively of professional soldiers, many of whom came from *ethnikoi* not subject to the empire: Russian Varangians, Armenians and Bulgarians. Latin cavalry and a number of Pecheneg contingents complete the picture of the Byzantine army in the eleventh century.

Basil II hesitated, apparently, to give too much power to any one general, with the exception of Nikephoros Ouranos. For example, aside from the latter, it appears that no one else was promoted to *domestikos* of the *scholia* in the east—or in the west⁷⁴—during Basil's

⁷¹ Yahya, III, 400; W. Felix, *Byzanz und die islamische Welt im früheren 11. Jahrhundert*, Byzantina Vindobonensia 14 (Vienna, 1981), 66.

⁷² N. Oikonomidès, *Fiscalité et exemption fiscale à Byzance (IX^e–XI^e s.)* (Athens, 1996), 270–71, 301.

⁷³ Yahya, II, 443. The seal of Christopher, interpreter of the Bulgarians, dates from this period: Laurent, *Corpus* II, no. 469 (we cannot be completely sure of the last part of the legend).

⁷⁴ In 997, when Nikephoros Ouranos vanquished Samuel at the battle of the Spercheios he was, according to Skylitzes (p. 341), archon of All the West, that is, the commander of the *tagmata* of Macedonia and Thrace. In principle this command was not connected with that of the *domestikos* of the *scholai* of the west. But we have also found several seals of a Nikephoros, *magistros* and *domestikos* of the *scholai*. The absence of any geographical mention normally indicates an earlier period, before the division of the office of *domestikos*, and one would be tempted to attribute this seal to Nikephoros Phokas who, under Constantine VII, held this rank and exercised this office. However, one of these seals was found at Preslav, in the context of the reconquest of the city around the year 1000: I. Jordanov, "Molybdobulles de domestiques des scholes du dernier quart du X^e siècle trouvées dans la stratégie de Preslav", *Studies in Byzantine Sigillography* 2 [Washington, DC, 1990], 210–11. Moreover, the iconographic motif, (the Virgin) is out of keeping with the habits of the Phokades in the tenth century, who did not use icons on their seals. Finally, the case is clear in an original document in the archives of Vatopedi, where allusion is made to Nikephoros, *magistros* and *domestikos* of the *scholai*: *Actes de Vatopedi* I, ed. J. Lefort, V. Kravari, Ch. Giros, Archives de l'Athos 21 (Paris, 2001), no. 2.

personal reign. The power of Nikephoros Ouranos was broadened when he was posted to Antioch, by far the most important and best guarded fortress of the east, as attested by his seal, where he is styled not *doux* of Antioch but 'Ruler of the East.'⁷⁵ It is possible that his predecessor, Damian Dalassenos, had also obtained a command which extended beyond the duchy of Antioch, for Yahya of Antioch affirms that Basil entrusted him with the command of the east,⁷⁶ which is to be understood, as in the case of Ouranos, as command over all or part of the *tagmata* stationed on the eastern borders, not over the themes of Asia Minor. After his succession to the throne, Basil's brother Constantine, who did not lead armies in the field during his reign, named the *parakoimomenos* Nicholas *domestikos* of the *scholai*.⁷⁷ Another officer, Theodorokanos, must have had broader command in the capacity of *archêgetês* of the East. The holder of this post, which had been recently created in as much as we find the first mention of it in the *Escorial Taktikon*, had charge, through the taxiarchs, of the professional infantry, which at this time was in part composed of Armenian garrisons of the duchy of Antioch.

The emperor's men in Asia Minor

Basil II reigned longer than any other emperor, more than half a century, or if we count only his personal reign, for some forty years. Paradoxically, however, we have only an imperfect knowledge of the personnel employed by him in the central administration and the government of the provinces. From this point of view it is significant that after Ouranos only two *doukes* of Antioch are attested during the last twenty years of Basil's reign: Michael the *koitonites* in 1011 and Constantine Dalassenos in 1025.⁷⁸ It should be noted that Basil transferred *strategoi* between Europe and Asia more than his predecessors had done: Nikephoros Ouranos, Basil Argyros, Nikephoros

(998), p. 69. It seems certain that Basil II had re-established the unity of command in the case of Nikephoros.

⁷⁵ See the commentary of E. McGeer, "Tradition and Reality in the Taktika of Nikephoros Ouranos", *DOP* 45 (1991), 120.

⁷⁶ Yahya, II, 444.

⁷⁷ Skylitzes, 370. Constantine broke with the tradition whereby the office of *domestikos* of the *scholai* was not to be conferred on eunuchs.

⁷⁸ Yahya, III, 470.

Xiphias were appointed commanders in the east after having proved themselves in the west.

Exception must be made, as we have said, for Nikephoros Ouranos, Basil's protégé and confidant from the time when the emperor was as it were subject to the *parakoimomenos* Basil. Judging from the chroniclers, Nikephoros appears to have been an isolated person, without any illustrious family connexions. All the same, however, he was descended from a family of high-ranking civil servants since at least the mid-tenth century. Basil Ouranos, probably an elder of the previous generation, was a correspondent of Theodore Daphnopates, who ascribed to him the rank of *protospatharios* and the office of *asêkrêtês*.⁷⁹ Nikephoros himself was keeper of the imperial ink-pot before his brilliant military career. The misfortunes of his brother Michael, to which Nikephoros refers in a letter, give us no clue as to his activities.⁸⁰ This Michael is probably to be distinguished from a *patrikios* of the same name who was responsible for financial matters during the preparations for the ill-fated Cretan expedition in 949.⁸¹ Finally, in the first half of the eleventh century, perhaps under Basil II, this family was apparently united by marriage to another which was also enrolled in the high-ranking civil service, the Bringai. Otherwise, we should be at a loss to explain how the nephew of Michael VI Bringas, appointed *doux* of Antioch in 1056, could have borne the name Ouranos.⁸² The rehabilitation of the Bringai under Basil II is easily explained. Joseph had been a faithful servant of the dynasty, even if he had failed to prevent the victory of Nikephoros Phokas in 963. After 986, hatred of the Phokades had become very useful political capital.

Amongst the other names which appear, the family of the Dalasenoï is the most in evidence, with Damian and his sons Romanos, Theophylact, and Constantine,⁸³ even though two of them remained

⁷⁹ Theodore Daphnopates, *Correspondance*, ed. and trans. J. Darrouzès and L.G. Westerink (Paris, 1976), 169, 171, 193.

⁸⁰ J. Darrouzès, *Épistoliers byzantins du X^e siècle* (Paris, 1960), 236–7.

⁸¹ Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De ceremoniis aulae Byzantinae libri duo*, ed. J.-J. Reiske, Bonn 1829–1830, 668. New edition by J. Haldon, "Theory and Practice in Tenth-Century Military Administration: Chapters II, 44 and 45 of the *Book of Ceremonies*", *TM* 13 (2000), 223.

⁸² Skylitzes, 483.

⁸³ See the notices concerning these persons in J.-C. Cheynet and J.-F. Vannier, *Études prosopographiques*, Byzantina Sorbonensia 5 (Paris, 1986), 76–85. One must also add John, brother or son of Damian.

captives of the Fatimids for ten years. It is certain that the Dalassenoi replaced the Phokades as the dominant family in the army of Asia Minor, despite the emperor's authorisation of their acquisition of landed property equal to that of the latter. The effects of this imperial favour were felt long after Basil II's death, for Constantine Dalassenos was on several occasions solicited for marriage to a princess born in the purple or suspected of aspiring to the throne. Nor did the family fail completely in such expectations, for the son of a Dalassena came to power in 1081.

The Komnenoi are observed more in the background. In 978 Manuel Komnenos zealously defended the cause of Basil II against Bardas Skleros, which would indicate that he was not close to the faction of the Phokades, who were less keen on supporting the young emperor. But then the Komnenoi disappear from sight until the end of the reign, when Nikephoros arrived in order to sort out the situation in Vaspurakan.⁸⁴ We know however that Basil II saw personally to the military education of Manuel's children, Isaac and John, probably orphaned from an early age. The origins of the Komnenoi remain mysterious, but Manuel's mother was descended from the Erotikoi.⁸⁵ There is no earlier attestation of these latter as military officials, but they had been in service to Constantine VII, who had given Nikephoros Erotikos, the son-in-law of the eparch Theophilos, the chair of geometry.⁸⁶

The eastern family of Argyros were the most illustrious of Basil II's supporters, for they had been great military leaders since the end of the ninth century.⁸⁷ They won the emperor's favour for two reasons. Firstly, the Argyroi were opposed, at the beginning of the tenth century, to the first attempts of the Phokades to seize power.

⁸⁴ Skylitzes, 355; Aristakes of Lastivert, 26.

⁸⁵ K. Barzos, *Ἡ γενεαλογία τῶν Κομνηνῶν*, Βυζαντινά Κείμενα καὶ Μελέται 20 (Thessaloniki, 1984), I, 37–9. It is not impossible that the origins of the Komneni are to be sought in Thrace (ibid., 25).

⁸⁶ A. Markopoulos, "Le témoignage du Vaticanus gr. 163 pour la période entre 945 et 963", *Σύμμεικτα* 3 (1979), 92. Theophanes Continuatus (p. 446), who recounts the same facts, calls Nikephoros the *gambros* of the eparch Theophilos Erotikos. It is unlikely, though not impossible, that the two men, united by the relation of *gambros* (generally, son- or brother-in-law) had the same family name. We should probably correct one of the manuscripts, perhaps that of Theophanes Continuatus.

⁸⁷ On the Argyroi, see J.F. Vannier, *Familles byzantines: les Argyroi (IX^e–XII^e siècles)*, Byzantina Sorbonensia 1 (Paris, 1975) and the review of this book by I. Djurić *Bsl* 39 (1978), 230–3.

This position brought them into alliance with the victorious faction, the Lekapenoi: Romanos Argyros married the youngest daughter of the emperor Romanos I. Thereby, the Argyroi also became relations of the Macedonian dynasty. Romanos was the brother-in-law of Constantine VII, grandfather of Basil II. The memory of this relationship had not been forgotten in 1028 when Constantine VIII, on his death-bed, sought a successor and chose the grandson of Romanos and Agatha, also named Romanos.⁸⁸ In 963, Marianos Argyros had also had the good sense to oppose Nikephoros Phokas. It is immediately clear why Basil should have placed such trust in the first cousins Basil and Leo Argyroi, even though they were hardly gifted as strategoi. The third brother, Romanos, chose a civil career, to which the emperor added lustre: he was a judge of the Hippodrome, with the rank of *patrikios*—quite high for a judge, who was usually only a *spatharokandidatos* or, at best, *protospatharios*; and he was also *oikonomos* of the Great Church.⁸⁹ From seals we know that he was also *megas chartoularios*⁹⁰ and judge of the Opsikon.⁹¹

Finally, one of the sisters, Pulcheria, married Basil Skleros, the grandson of the old rebel, at an unknown date though probably after 989, which would indicate that Basil II agreed to the marriage. One might suggest the date of 990/991, when the emperor received the visit of the old Bardas and his son Romanos near Didimoteichos.⁹² This meeting marks the reconciliation of the sovereign with the faction of the Skleroi. Romanos, a *magistros*, received a command in the east, which brought him into battle with the Fatimids near Antioch in 993.⁹³ On this occasion, the marriage of the grandson of Bardas to the first cousin of Basil II could have been worked out in order to confirm the links between the two families. Thereby the Skleroi became relations by marriage of the the Macedonian dynasty.

The Argyroi were not the only generals from the eastern parts of the empire to serve under Basil II. The Doukai, Botaneiatai and

⁸⁸ Yahya, III, 484.

⁸⁹ Vannier, *Argyroi*, 36–7.

⁹⁰ V.S. Šandrovskaja, *Sfragistika*, in: *Iskusstvo Vizantii v sobranijach SSSR—Katalog vystavki*, I–III (Moscow, 1977), no. 745.

⁹¹ Unpublished seal of the Hermitage Museum 4454 (I thank V.S. Šandrovskaja for this reference), confirmed by G. Ficker, *Die Phundagiagiten* (Leipzig, 1908), 97.

⁹² Yahya, II, 430.

⁹³ There is some doubt concerning the nature of the command exercised by Romanos, cf. Seibt, *Skleroi*, 61–3.

Diogenai were also employed, but more in the West. We must remember, however, that our lists of provincial officials are very patchy. The Doukai were not found, generally, in the same camp as the Phokades, which might explain the return to the foreground of the descendants of those who had escaped being massacred after the unsuccessful attempt by Constantine Doukas Lydos to usurp the throne in 913. The *doux* and *patrikios* Andronikos Doukas Lydos had, together with his sons Christopher and Bardas, supported the rebellion of Skleros.⁹⁴ In 1016 Bardas was sent to crush a revolt in Chazaria.⁹⁵ Andronikos Doukas, father of the future emperor Constantine, was made *strategos* of Preslav in the first third of the eleventh century, probably under Basil II.⁹⁶ If the name Lydos, 'the Lydian,' has any real sense, the Doukai must have then been established in Phrygia and no longer in Paphlagonia.

Like the Doukai, the Botaneiatas were settled in Phrygia in the eleventh century, but Basil II also assigned them to important posts in the west, for Theophylact Botaneiates was *doux* of Thessalonica at the time when this city served as a rearguard base against the Bulgarians.

Other Phrygian families, later related to the Botaneiatas, must have also found favour with Basil II, such as the Kabasilas and the Synadenoi. Nikephoros Kabasilas, *doux* of Thessalonica, massacred a band of Rus before the emperor's death.⁹⁷ Constantine Kabasilas, *doux* of Vaspurakan in 1034,⁹⁸ served at the side of Theodora in 1042 as an old retainer of her father Constantine VIII.⁹⁹ The Synadenoi were not to become officers of high rank until after the death of Basil II, but it is to be noted that one of the correspondents and friends of Nikephoros Ouranos, when he was *doux* of Antioch, was named Philetos Synadenos and held the office of judge of Tarsus.¹⁰⁰ The Melissenoi of Dorylaion are represented only by one Leo, who had supported Bardas Phokas until the battle of Abydos. Nevertheless, Basil II made use of his services, for Leo came to the aid of Michael Bourtzes, *doux* of Antioch, just before the crushing defeat of Gue at

⁹⁴ Skylitzes, 328.

⁹⁵ Skylitzes, 354.

⁹⁶ I. Jordanov, *Pečatite ot strategijata v Preslav* (Sofia, 1993), no. 303.

⁹⁷ Skylitzes, 368.

⁹⁸ Felix, *Byzanz*, 146–7, with earlier bibliography.

⁹⁹ Psellos, I, 103.

¹⁰⁰ See the note concerning this person in Darrouzès, *Épistoliers*, 48–9.

the hands of the Fatimids in 994.¹⁰¹ Thereafter the sources are silent concerning the rôle played by the Melissenoi, but the family occupied a pre-eminent position in the mid-eleventh century, amongst the others favoured by Basil II. Finally, it is surprising that there is no mention of the Palaiologoi who were also established in Phrygia and held high rank in the aristocracy in the last third of the eleventh century.

The Diogenai were alone in having once had close ties with the Phokades, for Adralestos Diogenes had supported the revolt of Bardas Phokas against John Tzimiskes.¹⁰² But a Diogenes had taken part in the conspiracy which, in December 944, put an end to the reign of Romanus Lekapenos and restored Constantine in all his rights.¹⁰³ No source specifies that the Diogenai were established in the east, but their links with the eastern aristocracy make this very likely. Basil II appreciated the proven military qualities of Constantine Diogenes and entrusted him with high-ranking posts in the west. It was probably because of this imperial favour that the Diogenai were able to supplant the Phokades in influence in Cappadocia.

John Chaldos was briefly *doux* of Thessalonica, but as we have seen, he commanded contingents from the East. He was descended from a family as ancient as the ruling dynasty itself. If the *strategos* of Calabria, Krinites Chaldos was a relation,¹⁰⁴ the family had already been in service to Basil's grandfather Constantine VII.

Nothing is known of the Xiphiai before the reign of Basil II, but they held the latter's favour, at least until the failed rebellion of Nikephoros Xiphias in 1022. Earlier, in 1006, the emperor had named Alexios Xiphias (a brother?) catepan of Italy. But this remains one of the rare examples of a promotion by Basil which did not permit the family to maintain its status of pre-eminence throughout the eleventh century.

Of all the generals who had participated in one or another rebellion against the Macedonian dynasty, only one, Michael Bourtzes, found

¹⁰¹ Yahya, II, pp. 440–1.

¹⁰² Skylitzes, 292.

¹⁰³ Theoph. Cont., 438, and A. Markopoulos, "Le témoignage du Vaticanus gr. 163 pour la période entre 945–963", *Σύμμεικτα* 3 (1979), 83–119 at 91.

¹⁰⁴ Skylitzes, 265. The name Chaldos might refer to the person's place of origin. (Chaldea), but Skylitzes uses this name in earlier passages. It first appears at the end of the tenth century as a transmissible family name.

favour with the emperor, who even appointed him to the most important post in the East. The origins of the Bourtzai, perhaps Arab, remain obscure. Michael Bourtzes, aided by the Armenian Isaac Brachamios, had taken possession of Antioch for the emperor Nicephorus Phokas. But, discontented with his recompense, he rallied to the cause of John Tzimiskes, who named him *doux* of Antioch. He could not therefore be associated with the Phokas faction, all the more so because it was he who, in 969, arrested and brought to Constantinople Leo, the son of Bardas Phokas who had still held Antioch for his father. This hostility to the Phokades and his thorough knowledge of the affairs of the duchy justified the renewed nomination of Bourtzes as *doux*, this time with the emperor's full accord.¹⁰⁵

In sum, Basil chose his *strategoi*, amongst Byzantines, from families which had served his ancestors faithfully. He also engaged as officers many foreigners, the great majority of them from the Caucasus. Armenia had long been a source of valued fighters, and Basil II continued this tradition, whereas many Armenians had taken part in the revolt of Bardas Skleros and were held in low esteem by both the inhabitants of the capital and the soldiers of the eastern themes, as demonstrated by the massacre of the Armenian soldiers of Skleros by the men of Bardas Phokas. The emperor preferred to employ Armenians who had been to a great extent Byzantinised, such as the Taronitai, though he was willing to entrust the theme of Cappadocia to Senacherim, former prince of Vaspurakan, if Skylitzes's information is exact.¹⁰⁶ At this time the strategic importance of such a post had diminished, for the border had passed far to the East. Moreover, it is probable that Basil sought to humiliate the Cappadocian aristocracy, which was still under Phokas influence, by imposing on them an Armenian *strategos*.¹⁰⁷ The Cappadocian revolt broke out in the very next year.

¹⁰⁵ On this person, cf. Cheynet-Vannier, *Études*, 18–24.

¹⁰⁶ Skylitzes, 355. Those close to Senacherim enjoyed great benefits (Yahya, III, 462). We also know that Senacherim's wife was made a *zôstê patrikia* in 1021 or later, that his elder son David was given the title of *magistros*, and that his younger son Abu Sahl was made *kouropalates*: W. Seibt, "Armenische Persönlichkeiten auf byzantinischen Siegeln", in N. Awde (ed.), *Armenian Perspectives. 10th Anniversary Conference, International Association of Armenian Studies* (Richmond, 1997), 269–72.

¹⁰⁷ This hypothesis was formulated by Howard-Johnston, "Crown Lands", 97–8, and Whittow, *Making of Orthodox Byzantium*, 379.

Side by side with the Byzantines Basil II employed numerous Armenians and Georgians, even though the former had supported Bardas Skleros and the latter Bardas Phokas. In this case the support given to rebels appears to have had no adverse consequence. The emperor considered it more important to show the Caucasian élite, especially the Georgians,¹⁰⁸ that they would have immediate recompense for their adherence to him. I shall not discuss the assimilation of these newcomers in detail, for they were employed more in the west, which severed their traditional links with the Phokas faction. The Apokapai,¹⁰⁹ the Pakourianoï¹¹⁰ and the family of Tornikios the Iberian¹¹¹ are good examples. The first were employed against Samuel of Bulgaria.¹¹² Details concerning individual Armenians, with the exception of Senacherim of Vaspurakan, are rarer, but it is certain that Basil II cut a good figure in Armenian milieux.

As A. Kazhdan judiciously noted, most of the families who eventually made up the faction of the Komnenoi,¹¹³ beginning with these latter themselves, had been favoured by Basil II who, perhaps in this domain as well, had forged the aristocracy of the future by personally arranging matrimonial alliances of certain of his protégés. Isaac Komnenos was thus married to a Bulgarian princess. It appears, too,

¹⁰⁸ Their Chalcedonian faith rendered them more acceptable to their subordinates. It is also possible that the emperor made a special effort with regard to the Georgians, in as much as these latter displayed recalcitrance toward Byzantine authority, despite the empire's capacity for absorbing new territories.

¹⁰⁹ On this family, see most recently M. Grünbart, "Die Familie Apokapes im Lichte neuer Quellen", *SBS* 5, 29–41.

¹¹⁰ On the Pakourianoï, P. Lemerle, *Cinq études sur le XI^e siècle byzantin* (Paris, 1977), 158–61.

¹¹¹ Tornikios Varasvatze, *protospatharios* and *strategos*: V. Šandrovskaja, "Oдно уточнение текста хроник Склитсы по материалам сфрагистики: (Explanation of a Text of Skylitzes on the Basis of Sigillographical Evidence)", *Soobsenija Ermitaza* 40 (1975), 46–8. The author attempts to identify him with a *strategos* Tornikios of Edessa known from another seal in the Hermitage. If the reading is correct, Tzotzikios is a new example of someone from the east being sent to serve in the West, for this can only have been the western Edessa: the eastern one was never the seat of a *strategos*. There was a *strategos* of Distra named Tzotzikios (Skylitzes, 356). His sons (?) were also in service to the empire, for one Kemaes Tzotzikios was *strategos* of Artach (cat. Spink n° 135, sale Zacos III, Oct. 1999, ed. J.-Cl. Cheynet, no. 262) and Pherses Tzotzikios *strategos* of Cappadocia: *DOSeals*, ed. McGeer, Nesbitt, Oikonomides, IV, 43.13).

¹¹² Basil Apokapes and his sons, one of them named Gregoras, were captured by the Bulgarian Tsar (Skylitzes, 363).

¹¹³ A.P. Kazhdan, S. Ronchey, *L'aristocrazia bizantina dal principio dell'XI alla fine del XII secolo* (Palermo, 1997), 141–6.

that Basil willingly employed former seconds-in-command of Bardas Phokas. He also recruited officers from amongst families who resided at the time in western Asia Minor, the Ouranoi, Doukai and Botaneiatiai.

Basil II's objectives

It is always difficult to affirm that any emperor had a determined policy, so greatly does imperial action appear dominated by events. Basil's reign is partly an exception to this rule in that there were few unexpected incidents in the east, save for the the defeats of the two *doukes* of Antioch. Basil clearly had two main concerns: to assure the fidelity of the army in the east, especially near the borders, and to maintain positions that had been occupied whilst allowing for adjustments which might be made without great military effort. It has been argued that Samuel's aggression obliged Basil to wage constant war in the west, precluding the diversion of troops to the East. But this argument may no longer valid, for it is now suggested that Basil was not constantly on campaign against Samuel but responded periodically to the latter's movements.¹¹⁴

The 'toparchs,' border chieftans or emirs, aligned themselves always with the side which seemed best to them, that is, which assured them the titles and resources necessary to keep control of their own subjects and to defend their countries from enemies they were unable to fight off alone. Kekaumenos illustrated his famous commentaries with examples of toparchs who were uncertain of which side they should choose. Samuel the Bulgarian very nearly succeeded in winning over a great part of the Byzantine aristocracy in the west, including Adrianople and Thessalonica.¹¹⁵ The emperor could not, therefore, disregard these small border states. Either he established dominion over them, with the risk of having to absorb them in the empire, or else incurred the danger of a future adversary winning them over. Basil played both registers, persuasion and repression. Even his admirers, Aristakes of Lastivert and Matthew of Edessa, tell of the cruelty inflicted by the imperial armies on the Georgians,

¹¹⁴ See most recently P. Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier. A Political Study of the Northern Balkans, 900–1204* (Cambridge, 2000), 62–77.

¹¹⁵ Skylitzes, 343.

a policy of terror which led the emir of Her to 'beg to be allowed to honour the emperor by paying tribute and recognising his power.'¹¹⁶

The struggle against the Muslims

After the extraordinary expansion of Byzantine power during the century preceeding the death of John Tzimiskes, the empire no longer had any enemy of equal stature in the east, with the exception of the Fatimids. These latter remained on the offensive throughout Basil's reign. At first it seemed they wanted to reconquer Antioch, but their attempts failed, despite several temporary successes. Then they concentrated their efforts on Aleppo, which they wanted to make a base for the conquest of Mesopotamia, and from thence the caliphate of Baghdad. Since Byzantium exercised a protectorate over this emirate from the time of Nikephoros Phokas, there were grounds for a major conflict. But the emperor did not appear to set great store by dominion over Aleppo. The reasons for this indifference are uncertain, for possession of this prosperous city was a source of revenue. However, there are several plausible explanations. The defence of Aleppo would have required the reinforcement of the troops, already numerous, of the duchy of Antioch; on the one hand, this would have involved the reduction of contingents in Europe and, on the other, would have given the *doux* of Antioch the power to entertain imperial ambitions, as had formerly been the case with the *strategoi* of the Anatolikoi. Secondly, Basil II probably reckoned that the Fatimids would exhaust a part of their dynamism in retaining Aleppo and its citadel if they managed to take it.¹¹⁷ In the event this forecast was proven correct.

The Bedouin also posed a threat to the stability of Syria from the second half of the tenth century, for their numbers had increased to the detriment of sedentary peoples. Seeing that the Hamdanids, in self-defence, had protected the eastern provinces of the empire from Bedouin raids,¹¹⁸ it is easy to understand how the maintenance

¹¹⁶ Aristakes of Lastivert, 13–14, 23–4.

¹¹⁷ On relations with the Fatimids see W. Faradj, "The Aleppo Question: A Byzantine-Fatimid Conflict of Interests in Northern Syria in the Later Tenth Century A.D.", *BMGS* 14 (1990) 44–60 and Bianquis, *Damas et la Syrie*, 195–209, 311–23.

¹¹⁸ On the importance of the Bedouin, cf. A.J. Cappel, "The Byzantine Response

of an emirate of Aleppo after the imperial triumph fitted in to a strategy of defence against the Bedouin. The treaty of 969/970 provided for the protection against marauders of caravans coming from Byzantine territory.¹¹⁹

In Mesopotamia, after the disappearance of the Hamdanids of Mosul, the Kurdish dynasty of the Marwanids established the most powerful emirate in the environs of Amida, especially at Mayyafarikin. Basil II could certainly not have forgotten that Bardas Skleros had managed to gather around himself Muslim contingents, amongst them Marwanids, for his revolt. The victorious emperor had treated Skleros with consideration and had not pursued the latter's former partisans with vengeance. This explains why, in 1000, when Basil travelled from Cilicia, where he had wintered, to the lands of the *kouropalates* David who had just died, the Marwanid Mumahhid ad-Dawla came to tender his submission and received in recompense the high rank of *magistros* and the office, somewhat obscure to us, of *doux* of the East.¹²⁰ Thereafter peaceful relations were maintained, even though the Byzantines retained the inheritance of the *kouropalates* David, Achlat and Mantzikert, coveted by the Marwanids. In fact, their modest territory and an internal crisis in the year 1011 prevented them from undertaking any great projects.¹²¹

The advance toward the Caucasus

Basil's policy was more active with regard to the Caucasus. Armenians and Georgians had long been involved in the life of the empire, to the point of taking active part in the struggles for power of the various factions of the aristocracy of Asia Minor. The Georgian princes had close ties with the Phokades, with whom they were united by

to the 'Arb (10th–11th Centuries)”, *BF* 20 (1994), 113–131. According to Mas‘udi, by the 960's ‘the Orontes valley had become largely depopulated owing to a combination of official negligence and Bedouin encroachment.’

¹¹⁹ Goods came not only from Northern Syria, for G. Schlumberger, (“Sceaux byzantins inédits, sixième série”, *Revue numismatique* [1920], no. 310) bought at Aleppo the seal of a *kommerkiarios* of Chaldea datable—in so far as possible—to the eleventh century.

¹²⁰ Cf. Felix, *Byzanz*, 134 and most recently T. Ripper, *Die Marwániden von Diyár Bakr. Eine kurdische Dynastie im islamischen Mittelalter* (Würzburg, 2000), 140–1.

¹²¹ Mumahhid ad-Dawla was killed in combat against his vizir Sarwa.

bonds of marriage, and the Armenian princes had to a great extent supported the rebellion of Bardas Skleros. The emperor had to sever these bonds forged on the battlefield if he was to secure peace on the eastern border. The direct or partial control of these border principalities was one of the most effective means of rallying local élites to the central power in Constantinople.

It was to the Caucasus that Basil belatedly directed his efforts, more in response to the propositions of Senacherim Artzrouni, prince of Vaspurakan, and to the provocation of George, prince of Abasgia, than out of any deliberate desire for expansion. It must have been fear of the Turks that decided Senacherim to abandon his kingdom. This is the most likely explanation, though for more than a century the empire had been absorbing Armenian and Georgian lands by promising their élites imperial titles and posts. Moreover, a philo-Byzantine current had developed in Armenian territories to the south, if we can believe the *Story of the True Cross of Aparank* written by Gregory of Narek, a monastery situated to the south-west of Lake Van.¹²² The novelty in the case of Senacherim was the extent of the transfer, for the whole of the population followed their ruler. It was perhaps the ascendancy of the Chalcedonians in the kingdom¹²³ which, a priori, facilitated the integration of the élite and its economic wealth,¹²⁴ which inclined Basil to accept Senacherim's proposition, despite the cost incurred by this annexation: the payment of the troops of the new catepanate and the revenue granted the former archon and his household. Again, the method chosen by Basil was to serve as a precedent, notably to Constantine Monomachos in the case of Gagik of Ani and to Constantine Doukas in the case of Gagik of Kars.

¹²² The importance of this text has been stressed by J.-P. Mahé, "Basile II et Byzance vus par Grigor Narekac'i", *TM* 11 (1991), 555–73. In 983 the monastery of Aparank' was the beneficiary of an exceptional imperial gift, a relic of the Holy Cross. The government at Constantinople might therefore grant great favours to a Monophysite monastery. This measure cannot be attributed, at this date, to Basil II, for the *parakoimomenos* Basil was still conducting affairs, but it cannot be excluded that the young emperor had at least given his advice. Mahé even considers that it was on his initiative that the relics were transferred.

¹²³ *Commentary on the Divine Liturgy by Xosrov Anjəwac'i*, trans. P. Cowe (New York, 1991), 8.

¹²⁴ Several trade routes passed through the cities of Vaspurakan: Ibn Hauqal, 532–3; al-Istakhri, 518; M. Canard, *Histoire de la dynastie des H'amdaniens de Jazîra et de Syrie*, I (Algiers, 1951), 191.

One risks misunderstanding certain of the emperor's goals if one loses sight of the fact that internal and external policy were indistinguishable from one another in Byzantium. The chronology of the events of 1021–1022 makes clear the close relation between Basil's concern for the containment of the aristocracy of Asia Minor and his foreign objectives. In 1021, taking advantage of the disappearance in February of al-Hakim¹²⁵ which neutralised all danger on the Fatimid side, Basil conducted his first campaign against George, prince of the Georgians and Abasgians. Whilst taking up winter quarters in Trebizond, without demobilising the army, Basil prepared the transfer of a part of the Armenian élite of Vaspurakan which had been bequeathed to him by its prince, Senacherim Artzroni,¹²⁶ and settled them in the cities of Sebasteia, Larissa and Avara; Senacherim was awarded the rank of *patrikios* and *strategos* of Cappadocia.¹²⁷ It was most probably now that Basil took conciliatory measures with regard to the Armenian Monophysite community, for example by allowing the patriarch Peter, who had come to visit him, to celebrate Epiphany according to the Armenian rite. On this same occasion Basil received the famous testament of John-Symbatios, king of Armenia, which named him heir to the kingdom.¹²⁸

In the spring of 1022, whilst negotiations between George and Basil continued, a part of the aristocracy of Asia Minor conspired with Nikephoros Phokas behind the emperor's back. Given that Basil and his troops were not far off, the reasons for discontentment must have been serious. Of this there can be no doubt. After a part of the Bulgarian royal family had been established in Asia Minor, numerous Armenians had in turn received land grants, originating probably in confiscations from the local aristocracy. It was pure provocation that an Armenian was set at the head of the theme of Cappadocia. One need only remember how, several years earlier, the troops of

¹²⁵ Yahya, III, 444.

¹²⁶ Cf. E. Honigsmann, *Die Ostgrenze des byzantinischen Reiches von 363–1071 nach griechischen, arabischen, syrischen und armenischen Quellen*, Corpus Bruxellense Historiae Byzantinae 3 (Brussels, 1935), 168–71; W. Seibt, "Die Eingliederung von Vaspurakan in das byzantinische Reich (etwa Anfang 1019 bzw. Anfang 1022)", *Handes Amsorya* 92 (1978), 49–66.

¹²⁷ Skylitzes, 354–5. To fill the void, at least partially; Basil transferred—at least temporarily—numerous Bulgarians after their final defeat (Aristakes of Lastivert, 7, who has little esteem for them).

¹²⁸ Aristakes of Lastivert, 15–16.

Bardas Phokas, father of Nikephoros, had with fury massacred the Armenians in the service of Bardas Skleros. The rebels counted on success by restoring the traditional links of the Phokades with the Georgians. George was sure to support them, for, having seen his country devastated by the emperor, he had no chance of salvation unless the imperial army, and in particular the formidable Rus regiment, was forced to confront a new adversary.

Basil was informed of the whole affair, and the rebellion ended in obscure circumstances on 15 August 1022, without having been openly declared. The conspirators were divided, and the rôle of Xiphias, former companion in arms of the emperor and then *strategos* of the Anatolikon, cannot easily be determined. It is certain that Nikephoros Phokas was assassinated by a member of his entourage. According to Aristakes, it was David Senacherim who, having taken part in the plot, regained his senses and realised the criminal nature of the undertaking.¹²⁹ It is more likely that he was acting on behalf of the emperor and perhaps acted as an informer.¹³⁰ The head of the chief conspirator, Nikephoros Phokas, was brought to Basil's camp and shown to the whole army in order to revive wavering loyalties.¹³¹ Basil visited his wrath on the Georgians. Pherses, one of the Georgian nobles in the entourage of the *kouropalates* David who, in 1000, had been taken to Constantinople as hostage, had later received estates in Basean. He had served as a liaison between the rebels and George of Abasgia.¹³² His punishment was a terrible one: he and his son-in-law lost their heads.

Basil II had not ventured to take the field against George as long as his rear flank was exposed. Once free of this worry, he attacked and emerged victor of a bloody battle. We cannot be sure of the accuracy of Skylitzes's account. He describes two consecutive battles, one of which, dated to 11 September of the sixth indiction (1022), saw the death of Liparites, one of George's principal generals.¹³³ But

¹²⁹ Aristakes of Lastivert, 19.

¹³⁰ Matthew of Edessa, trans. Dostourian, 45, also alludes to this reconciliation between the Artzruni and Basil, alleging that the emperor had adopted Senacherim's son.

¹³¹ Aristakes of Lastivert, 19.

¹³² Aristakes of Lastivert, 20–21. Basil had him arrested by 'cavalrymen belonging to pagan regiments.' Despite the fact that the text talks of cavalry, these were probably Varangians. The emperor would not have entrusted such a task to Greeks.

¹³³ Skylitzes, 367.

in fact Liparites was killed during the first of Basil's Georgian campaigns.¹³⁴ After the revolt had been put down and George had made his submission, Basil was willing to negotiate without requiring anything more than he had demanded earlier, that is, that he should receive the legacy of David the *kouropalates* in its entirety.

The territorial situation

In northern Syria Basil II was content to consolidate the duchy of Antioch even without maintaining direct control over Aleppo, which had been achieved by his predecessors. He would probably have wanted to take possession of Tripoli, from which the Fatimids could launch attacks by land and by sea. But the most important indication of imperial passivity in Syria was the lack of any reaction to the destruction of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem by al-Hakim.¹³⁵ In short, as regards Syria, Basil opted for the defensive policy of earlier emperors who hardly ever left Constantinople, such as his grandfather Constantine VII.¹³⁶ Further north the territorial gains were considerably greater because Basil finally recuperated the legacy of the *kouropalates* David and absorbed Vapourakan, to say nothing of his preparations for the annexation of the kingdom of Ani. Furthermore, generals on the borders were left free to engage their direct adversaries: thus the catepan of Vaspourakan, Nikephoros Komnenos, who was held to be very active and brave by Byzantines as well as Armenians, took possession of Arces.¹³⁷ If one observes the borders of the empire in 986, one sees that the advance toward the east was not really inferior to that toward the west. The impression of vast conquests in the Balkans is made more spectacular by the fact that Samuel had at first met with great success and that it was necessary to regain territories lost after 986.

¹³⁴ Aristakes of Lastivert, 13. G. Schlumberger, *L'épopée byzantine*, II (Paris, 1890), 484, proposes that R'ad Liparites had been killed in 1021 and his son in the following year.

¹³⁵ See the apt remark of Whittow, *Making of Orthodox Byzantium*, 381.

¹³⁶ J. Shepard demonstrates that it was Constantine VII's intention all along to bar the routes of access to the Anatolian plateau to Muslims, and that he had at first attempted to repulse the incursion of Saif ad-Daula: J. Shepard, "Constantine VII, Caucasian openings and the road to Aleppo", in A. Eastmond (ed.), *Eastern Approaches to Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2001), 19–40.

¹³⁷ Aristakes of Lastivert, 27.

One must not, therefore, be deceived by the view of the reign of Basil II presented the Greek sources, which are very partial and which suggest that the emperor concerned himself with nothing but the Balkans.¹³⁸ From the outset the emperor maintained continuous diplomatic relations with the most important Muslim power of the time, the caliphate of Baghdad, until the end of the great rebellions, and then with the caliphate of Cairo. Between 980 and 1025 we count, solely on the basis of Arabic sources,¹³⁹ a dozen exchanges of ambassadors amongst the three capitals. Although it is certain that Basil had no expansionist ambitions in Syria, he was nevertheless wary of being accused of not taking care of what Nikephoros Phokas, surnamed the Victorious, had added to the empire.

Conclusion: Basil II's Legacy

Basil's legacy was the durable military and social organisation of Asia Minor. From a military point of view, he considered that the territory brought under Byzantine control by his predecessors sufficed for the interests of the empire, except for the need to improve border defences. For this reason he allowed adjustments by the incorporation of Armenian and Georgian territories if this involved no protracted effort. When any serious threat was posed to imperial provinces, for example, the duchy of Antioch or Chaldia, he intervened personally. Confronted with the Fatimids, he would have been willing to supplement the Byzantine system of defence by incorporating the emirate of Tripoli into the empire or by seizing Apamea or Homs. But he did not pursue this objective with conviction. Nevertheless his example inspired Romanos III to retain the city of Edessa captured by the bravery of George Maniakes. Basil II must have considered his victories over the Bulgarians as the counterpart of the triumphs of earlier emperors in the east, but it would appear that he thought his own campaigns in the east to be the key points of his reign. Imperial coinage bears witness to this. P. Grierson has distinguished several classes in the issues of *nomismata*. The fourth of

¹³⁸ In my study on revolts I wrongly stated that Basil had expansionist intentions only in the west (Cheynet, *Pouvoir*, 336).

¹³⁹ Yahya, II–III; Maqrīzī, *Description topographique et historique de l'Égypte*. [Deuxième partie], French trans. U. Bouriant (Paris, 1900).

these marks a rupture with the appearance of a crown above the head of the emperor, a symbol which had disappeared from monetary iconography since the fifth century. Grierson argues, convincingly, that the introduction of the crown of victory should be dated to the year 1001, which marked the victorious end of two years of campaigns in Asia Minor.¹⁴⁰

Finally, Basil II has been accused of having weakened the strategic position of Byzantium by absorbing the buffer states which had for centuries stopped the advance of invaders. In fact, one would have to prove that the existence of such states was sufficient to ward off invasions. In the seventh century, when the Arab attack was intensified after the defeat of Yarmuk, the lack of firm control over Armenia allowed local élites to negotiate an accord of non-aggression which spared their country but which exposed the empire to direct strikes from its enemies. In addition, it appears that Basil was concerned to maintain peaceful relations with his principal potential adversary, the Fatimid caliphate, as shown by the repeated embassies between Constantinople and Cairo. In places where no great power was opposed to the Empire, the emperor wanted to establish a series of allied emirates, whose chiefs received titles and subsidies from Constantinople, such as the Mirdassids of Aleppo and the Marwanids of Diyarbakir. There was nothing imprudent in this, for the spirit of jihad had greatly diminished owing to the failure of the Hamdanids and the moderation of the Byzantines. These tiny emirates, peopled largely by Christians,¹⁴¹ might well prefer imperial protection to Muslim domination. When the Seljukids became masters of Baghdad and advanced toward Jezireh and Syria, they came up against these emirs.

Following the example of John Tzimiskes, who had begun to remedy the splintering of small Armenian border themes by organising a large district around Antioch, Basil created a series of large districts along the eastern border, a measure which he repeated in the

¹⁴⁰ P. Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins, in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, II-III, 2 (Washington, DC, 1973), 606-7.

¹⁴¹ The Turkish successor states of these emirates took account of the Christian population by issuing coins with iconography inspired by Byzantine models, and certain dynasties (the Zengids and Danismendids) even used overstruck Byzantine coins: G. Hennequin, *Catalogue des monnaies musulmanes. Asie pré-mongole. Les Saljuqs et leurs successeurs* (Paris, 1985), esp. 619-35.

west after the conquest of Bulgaria. He stationed there the best troops of the empire, many of them foreigners, especially Armenians, and probably after 1018 also Bulgarians, causing at least a partial demilitarisation of what contemporaries called the great 'Roman' themes. This structure served as a model to all Basil's successors in the eleventh century, with the exception of Romanos IV, who attempted a partial return to the old system of conscription. The only innovation of note after Basil's reign was the massive employment of Latin cavalry.

In the social sphere, Basil II endeavoured to reconstitute an aristocracy in Asia Minor which would no longer pose a threat to the central power, and this objective affected his foreign policy. He took various measures concerning the structure of landed property. In general, one suspects that he was less generous in his grants of state lands to superior officers. Moreover, he introduced new elements, Armenians and Georgians and, at the end of his reign, Bulgarians. Finally, as is well known, Basil punished the faction of the Phokades, the Maleinoi and the Moselai by depriving them of the greater part of their property, thereby increasing the wealth of the state and at the same time allowing him to be generous toward the newcomers.

It remains to assess the impact of Basil II's regime in Asia Minor on the course of Byzantine history in the eleventh century. Scholarly opinions still diverge considerably, depending on whether one considers Basil's reign as the culmination of the expansion of the medieval empire or detects here forebodings of future disaster. M. Whitrow, who ends his history of the transformation of the Roman Empire into an Orthodox state centred on Constantinople with the reign of Basil II, judges the latter's policy in the east simply as conservative and in no way blames him for the ills which follow. On the other hand, M. Angold, who begins his excellent political history of the empire with the death of Basil, passes severe judgement on the overwhelming burden he bequeathed to his successors: an aggressive military policy demanding a rigorous system of taxation, a social policy which left little place for new forces generated by the economic revival, and finally the enlargement of the empire involving the absorption of foreign and heterodox populations, which gave offence to the Orthodox¹⁴² and endangered the provinces where these peoples

¹⁴² According to Matthew of Edessa (Matt.Ed., 43), Basil summoned to Constan-

of uncertain loyalty were settled. Here we are far from the favourable assessment of G. Schlumberger who, a century ago, considered Basil's reign as the high point of the 'épopée byzantine,' an opinion which is still reflected in the *History* of G. Ostrogorsky, who considered 1025 as the beginning of the empire's decline.

We have already responded to the accusation of excessive fiscal rigour. There is no proof that Basil overtaxed the empire's resources. He gained better control of them, having the revenues from state lands, augmented by confiscated estates, sent directly to Constantinople. Military expenses, if they were proportionate to the size of the army, should not have increased by much, since the empire maintained only one large army in operation, whereas the troops of Asia Minor were partially disbanded.

Did the absorption of new Armenian territories alter the demographic balance to the detriment of the 'Orthodox'? In the first place, the emperor who brought in the greatest number of heterodox foreigners was Nikephoros Phokas, though Basil in no way broke with the practice of his predecessor. The introduction of Georgians presented no difficulty from a religious point of view, for they were Chalcedonians, but the difference of language separated them from their Greek co-religionists. Basil transferred numerous Armenians to Asia Minor, but many of them were probably Chalcedonians, and amongst the élite were many who would serve the empire faithfully in the course of the following century. Basil certainly did begin preparations for the annexation of the kingdom of Ani, more homogeneous from a religious point of view and attached to its national religion. However, judging from the manner in which this annexation was accomplished, the empire could count on a strong party at the country's core.

Nevertheless, all the measures taken after Nikephoros Phokas's victories until the annexation of Ani in 1044 had the effect of reducing local Chalcedonians to a minority. Was the failure of this policy inevitable? Might Basil II have at least foreseen it? To be sure, the passing of time was necessary in order for the newly diversified aris-

tinople the Armenian scholar (*vardapet*) Samuel who surpassed all the learned Greeks, whom the emperor consequently punished. Matthew also alleges (*ibid.*, 53) that Basil, in his will, commanded his brother and successor to take care of the Armenians. In fact, the first signs of religious intolerance at Constantinople are later than the death of Constantine VIII.

tocracy of Asia Minor, including Greeks, Bulgarians, Georgians and Armenians, to mix, whereas the Turkish onslaught left them hardly a quarter of a century's respite. In fact, the project nearly succeeded, for amongst those who defended the empire's south-eastern border against the Turks in the last quarter of the eleventh century we note numerous Armenians and Georgians: Kachatur and Philaretos Brachamios, *doukes* of Antioch, Apellarip, the defender of Tarsus and Cilicia, and later Hethum at Edessa, Gabriel at Melitene, and Thathul at Marash.¹⁴³ The great emperor's successors, however, did not have the same stature nor, above all, legitimacy, and they were forced to return to a policy favoured by the Church of Constantinople, to placate the clergy and probably also public opinion of the capital, on which imperial power now depended more than in Basil's time.

In short, the Asia Minor invaded by the Turks was still organised according to the principles defined by Basil II, who served as a constant model to his successors—including those of the so-called 'civil aristocracy'—partly on account of his success, and partly because they inherited his ministers, such as John the Orphanotrophos, who perpetuated his policies. It was not until the reigns of Romanos IV Diogenes and Michael VII Doukas that the local recruitment of troops was again practised, though only in part. Basil II had reinforced the organisation of the borders on the basis of duchies and a catapanate employing the great majority of available forces, leaving the traditional themes nearly devoid of troops. In the event, this plan facilitated the Turkish advance, once the line of defence on the border had been breached.¹⁴⁴ It would however be unjust to blame Basil, even indirectly, for the loss of Asia Minor at the end of the eleventh century. Rather, it was the long duration of his influence that hindered adaptation to the new situation created by the invasions of the Turks and, to a lesser degree in Europe, the Pechenegs.

¹⁴³ Cf. several essays in *L'Arménie et Byzance. Histoire et culture*, Byzantina Sorbonensia 12 (Paris, 1996): V. Arutjunova-Fidanjan, "L'image de l'empire byzantin dans l'histoire arménienne médiévale (X^e–XI^e s.)", 7–17; J.-Cl. Cheynet, "Les Arméniens de l'Empire en Orient de Constantin X à Alexis Comnène", 67–78; G. Dédéyan, "Les princes arméniens de l'Euphratèse et l'Empire byzantin (fin XI^e–milieu XII^e s.)", 79–88; Nina Garsoïan, "The Problem of Armenian Integration into the Byzantine Empire, in H. Ahrweiler – A. Laiou (eds.), *Studies on the Internal Diaspora of the Byzantine Empire* (Washington, DC, 1998), 53–124.

¹⁴⁴ J.-Cl. Cheynet, "La conception militaire de la frontière orientale (IX^e–XIII^e s.)", in A. Eastmond (ed.), *Eastern Approaches to Byzantium*, 57–69.

Basil II can with much greater certainty be reproached for not having assured the continuity of the dynasty, for reasons which escape us.¹⁴⁵ In the end it was the struggle to establish a new dynasty, in the absence of any dominant group of the aristocracy after Basil's subjugation of the Phokades, which, together with the foreign invasions, rendered the situation uncontrollable.

¹⁴⁵ Hypotheses can always be attempted. One of the most interesting was that of M. Arbagi, "The Celibacy of Basil II", *Byzantines Studies/Études byzantines* 2 (1975), 41–5, who, basing himself on information provided by Adémar of Chabannes, argues that Basil lived a quasi-monastic life in consequence of a vow. This hypothesis is also accepted by L. Garland, "Basil II as Humorist", *Byzantion* 79 (1999), 321. Basil's austerity during his personal reign is beyond doubt and stands in contrast to his youth, but this does not explain why the emperor did not take care for the marriage of his nieces. Perhaps he wanted to avoid the often pervasive influence of relations by marriage. His grandfather Constantine VII had been subject to his father-in-law, Romanus Lekapenos, and Basil himself had with difficulty got free of the regency of his great-uncle the *parakoimomenos*.

THE BALKAN FRONTIER IN THE YEAR 1000*

Paul Stephenson

Ravines, mountains and rivers formed the natural frontiers, reinforced by towns and fortresses constructed by men. The barbarian who rode his mount as far as these was struck by the sight and restrained, not daring to advance further into our lands: the fortress was an obstacle to him. But when this barrier is broken down, all those opposite rush into our lands like the flood of a river when a dyke is breached. Now Romanity and barbarity are not kept distinct, there are intermingled and live together. For this reason the barbarians are at war with us, some at the Euphrates, others on the Danube.¹

This is the judgement of Michael Psellos, writing after the incursions across the Danube by Pechenegs, which commenced in 1046–7.² Psellos portrays the Danube frontier as a fixed and enduring line which divided Romanity from barbarity, and one which when breached had consequences for both Romans and barbarians. His rhetorical construction of the frontier draws more on classical models than on contemporary observation. Psellos will have read a number of earlier authors who regarded the Danube as Rome's natural frontier in the north, and his judgement is, therefore, quite in keeping with the

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¹ *Michaelis Pselli scripta minora*, ed. E. Kurtz and F. Drexler, II (Milan, 1941), 239. For a similar pessimistic view of the nomadic invasions, referring to the Ouzes (called *Mysoi*) see his *Chronographia*: Psellos, II, 125. Elsewhere Psellos wrote more optimistically, in praise of emperors who drove the shuddering Scythians back across the frontier at the Danube. See *Michaeli Pselli orationes panegyricae*, ed. G.T. Dennis (Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1994), 116; *Michaeli Pselli poemata*, ed. L. Westerink (Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1994), 257. For similar presentations of the Danube as the empire's natural frontier against the Scythians, see John Geometres, PG 106, cols. 806–1002 at 902, 919–20; John Mauropous, ed. P. de Lagarde, *Ioannis Euchaitorum metropolitae quae in cod. Vat. gr. 676 supersunt* (Göttingen, 1882), 142–7 at 145 (§ 13). For modern conceptions of the Danube as the empire's natural frontier: A. Kazhdan, "Frontiers", in *ODB*, II, 1797; F. Schön, "Fluss", in *Mensch und Landschaft in der Antike. Lexicon der Historischen Geographie*, ed. H. Sonnabend (Stuttgart and Weimar, 1999), 149–50; R. Tomlin, "Limes", in *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth, 3rd ed. (Oxford, 1996), 862. Henceforth: *OCD*.

² For the date: A. Kazhdan, "Once more the 'alleged' Russo-Byzantine treaty (ca. 1047) and the Pecheneg crossing of the Danube", *JÖB* 26 (1977), 65–77.

classicizing tendencies of middle Byzantine literature.³ He fails to register that for most of the preceding four centuries the frontier of Romanity lay far to the south of the Danube. Since the invasion of the Turkic Bulgars under Asparuch in *c.* 680 until the campaigns of John Tzimiskes in 971, the so-called 'First Bulgarian Empire' had dominated the northern Balkans. In the reign of Tsar Symeon (*c.* 894–927) the frontier between Byzantium and Bulgaria, as marked by boundary stones, ran some 22km north of Thessalonica, and in the 920s Bulgarian garrisons were installed throughout Thrace, the hinterland of Constantinople itself.⁴ The extent of Tzimiskes' *reconquista*, and the nature of Byzantine rule thereafter is the subject of much discussion which cannot be reprised here.⁵ In any event Byzantine control of the north-eastern and western Balkans was short-lived: Tzimiskes' advances were eradicated by Samuel Kometopoulos before 986. That Psellos considered the Danube the natural frontier of Romanity, therefore, was due to the efforts of Basil II (976–1025).⁶

³ See initially, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, ed. P.A. Brunt and J.M. Moore (Oxford, 1967), 34–5; and thereafter, for example: Luc. 2.49–52; Tac., *Germ.* I; Herodian 6.7.6; Procop., *Aed.* IV.5.9–10 (for abbreviations see *OCD*, cited above, n. 1). In the last instance, Procopius regards the Danube as: 'the boundary between the barbarians, who hold it's left bank, and the territory of the Romans, which is on the right'. He proceeds to list the fortifications on that bank restored by Justinian. Psellos will certainly have read Procopius, and probably also Herodian, although neither feature in the lists of authors he cites as his 'Muses', for which see Psellos, I, xxxiii–xxxviii. On knowledge of Procopius and Herodian in the Middle Byzantine Period, see Photius, *Bibliothèque*, ed. R. Henry, 9 vols. (Paris, 1959–91), I, 64–76; II, 66–70; N.G. Wilson, *Scholars of Byzantium* (London, 1983), 186–7.

⁴ See now J. Shepard, "Bulgaria: the other Balkan 'empire'", in T. Reuter (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, III, *c.* 900–*c.* 1024 (Cambridge, 1999), 567–85 at 577.

⁵ V. Tăpkova-Zaimova has written extensively on this. See her monograph: *Dolni Dunav—granichna zona na vizantijskăia zapad* (Sofia, 1976). Several of her papers are conveniently collected in *Byzance et les Balkans à partir du VI^e siècle* (London, 1979). Important papers published since then include: "Les frontières occidentales des territoires conquis par Tzimiscès", in H. Ahrweiler (ed.), *Géographie historique du monde méditerranéen*, Byzantina Sorbonensia 7 (Paris, 1988), 113–18; "Quelque nouvelles données sur l'administration byzantine au Bas Danube (fin du X^e–XI^e s.)", *Bsl* 54 (1993), 95–101. The study of the region was transformed by N. Oikonomides' discovery of the *Escorial Taktikon*. Oikonomides published numerous important articles, most recently "À propos de la première occupation byzantine de la Bulgarie (971–ca 986)", in M. Balard et al. (ed.), *EYΨYXIA. Mélanges offerts à Hélène Ahrweiler*, Byzantina Sorbonensia 16, II (Paris, 1998), 581–9. See now also P. Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier: A Political Study of the Northern Balkans, 900–1204* (Cambridge, 2000), 51–61.

⁶ Psellos acknowledges Basil's efforts to defend the empire's frontiers in the east and west in his *Chronographia* (Psellos, I, 14, 20).

Basil's Balkan campaigns were facilitated by the remarkable stability of the empire's eastern frontier. The collapse of the Buyid position in Baghdad after 983 meant that for the first time since the seventh century no great power sat beyond Armenia and the Transcaucasus. An alliance with the Fatimid Caliph al-Hakim in 1000 or 1001 (renewed in 1011 and 1023), and the contemporaneous annexation of Upper Tao, lands which formerly pertained to the *kouropalates* David, thus freed Basil to look west.⁷ Basil also benefitted from a change in the situation north of the Black Sea. Whereas Tzimiskes' campaigns north of the Haemus had been inspired by a Russian invasion along the lower Danube, Basil's closer relationship with the Rus after 988 limited this threat, and the Kievan conversion to Orthodox Christianity may also have had a pacifying influence with regard to Byzantium. However, a greater boon to Basil's expansion into the northern Balkans was the intensification in hostilities between the Rus and Pechenegs recorded in the *Russian Primary Chronicle*.⁸ Constant warfare between Rus and Pechenegs during the reign of the Kievan prince Vladimir (978–1015) prevented either people from harbouring designs towards the lower Danube. Excavations have confirmed the *Chronicle's* testimony that Vladimir undertook extensive construction work to defend Kiev. He constructed long lines of earthworks known as the 'Snake Ramparts' to the south and west of the city, including a continuous wall on the left bank of the Dnieper. Fortifications were erected along the Dnieper's tributaries, which Vladimir garrisoned with the best men from local Slav tribes.⁹

Basil's first advance towards Sardica (modern Sofia) in 1001 divided Samuel's realm in two. It is, therefore, both convenient and appropriate to treat the frontier in two parts, north-east and north-west. Success in the eastern portion was swift. His generals Theodorokanos and Nikephoros Xiphias recovered Preslav, 'Little Preslav' (Presthlatviza), and Pliska with remarkable speed.¹⁰ The speed of the Byzantine

⁷ J.H. Forsyth, "The Byzantine-Arab Chronicle (938–1034) of Yahya ibn Sa'id al-Antaki" (unpublished University of Michigan Ph.D. thesis, Ann Arbor, 1977), I, 513–15.

⁸ *Povest' vremennykh let. Po Lavrent'evskoj letopisi 1377 goda*, ed. D.S. Likhachev and V. Adrianova-Perets, I (Moscow and Leningrad, 1950), 83; English trans. S.H. Cross and O. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, *The Russian Primary Chronicle* (Cambridge, MA, 1953), 119.

⁹ S. Franklin and J. Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus 750–1200* (London and New York, 1996), 169–80; J. Shepard, "The Russian steppe frontier and the Black Sea zone", *Ἀρχαίον Πόντου* 35 (1979), 218–37.

¹⁰ Skylitzes, 343–4.

advance illustrates how control of the whole region rested with a few strongholds, within which Samuel had only nominal support. (Support for Tzimiskes had been equally superficial.) Much of the interior region, between the lower Danube and Haemus mountains, remained unoccupied and uncultivated and the population was concentrated in settlements on the river Danube and Black Sea. The so-called Mysian plain was not brought under cultivation until the advent of widespread irrigation in the nineteenth century.¹¹

Basil's forces reoccupied fortresses which had been captured and, in some cases, redeveloped by Tzimiskes after his earlier reconquest of Bulgaria. The *Escorial Taktikon* (or *Taktikon Oikonomides*), the modern name given to a precedence list drawn up in Constantinople between 975 and 979, gives some indications of Tzimiskes' arrangements, and we can surmise that Basil's were not identical. For example, a command known as Mesopotamia of the West was created in the lands of the Danube delta; this district did not survive into Basil's time.¹² However, finds of seals demonstrate that officers from the Byzantine field army were installed as garrison commanders in several localities known from the *Escorial Taktikon*. The first *strategoi* of Preslav were a certain *protospatharios* named John, and the more senior *protospatharios epi tou Chrysotrikliniou* Constantine Karantenos.¹³ The commander appointed at Dristra was the *primikerios* Theodore.¹⁴ Contem-

¹¹ For perceptive commentary on the region into the early Byzantine period, see A. Poulter, "Town and country in Moesia Inferior", in A. Poulter (ed.), *Ancient Bulgaria. Papers presented to the International Symposium on the Ancient History and Archaeology of Bulgaria, University of Nottingham, 1981*, II (Nottingham, 1983), 74–118. For the most recent survey of archaeological excavations see the 37 papers collected in G. von Bulow and A. Milcheva (eds.), *Der Limes an der unteren Donau von Diokletian bis Heraklios. Vorträge der internationalen Konferenz Svishtov, Bulgarien (1.–5. September 1998)* (Sofia, 1999). For comments on patterns of settlement in the Balkans drawing on written sources see M. Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy, 300–1450* (Cambridge, 1985), 78–90.

¹² N. Oikonomides, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IX^e–X^e siècles* (Paris, 1972), 268–9; N. Oikonomides, "Recherches sur l'histoire du Bas-Danube au X^e–XII^e siècles: Mésopotamie d'Occident", *Revue des études sud-est européennes* 3 (1965), 57–79. The latest research is summarised insightfully by A. Madgearu, "The military organization of Paradunavon", *Bsl* 60 (1999), 421–46.

¹³ I. Iordanov, *Pechatite ot strategiatata v Preslav (971–1088)* (Sofia, 1993), 146–9; idem, "Neizdadeni vizantiiski olovni pechaty ot Silistra (II)", *Izvestiia na Narodniia Muzei Varna* 21 [36] (1985), 98–107 at 102, no. 6.

¹⁴ I. Iordanov, "Neizdadeni vizantiiski olovni pechaty ot Silistra (I)", *Izvestiia na Narodniia Muzei Varna* 19 [34] (1983), 97–110 at 109, no. 16.

porary *strategoi* at Presthlavitza were Leo Pegonites,¹⁵ and John Maleses, also known as Malesios (and possibly Melias).¹⁶

N. Oikonomides identified Presthlavitza, the Little Preslav, as Nuřaru on the St. George arm of the Danube delta.¹⁷ The material evidence uncovered by extensive excavations at the site appears to confirms this. Archaeologists have discovered the foundations of ramparts on a promontory overlooking the river. The adjacent site is littered with fragments of pottery and other everyday utensils, and more than 1250 stray finds of coins have been discovered which date from *c.* 971 to *c.* 1092.¹⁸ Upstream from Presthlavitza, the *kastron* of Noviodunum dominated the Danube at one of its principal fords. It had been the base of the Roman fleet of the Danube (*Classis Flavia Moesica*), and shows signs of substantial renovations in the period after 971, and continuous occupation thereafter. Similarly, at Dinogetia (modern Garvăn) the original walls of the *kastron*, which were destroyed by an invasion of Koutrigours in around 560, were rebuilt and a whole new gate complex was added under Tzimiskes.¹⁹ Two small fortresses at Capidava and Dervent were occupied from 971 until their destruction by the Pechenegs in or shortly after 1036. At Dervent a further seal of the aforementioned 'John Maleses, *patrikios* and *strategos*' has been discovered.²⁰

¹⁵ I. Iordanov, "Neizdadeni (I)", 104–5, no. 10 (from Silistra); idem, *Pechatite*, 153–4 (from Preslav); N. Bănescu and P. Papahagi, "Plombs byzantins découverts à Silistra", *Byzantion* 10 (1935), 601–6 (from Silistra); V. Sandrovskaya, "Iz istorii Bolgarii X–XII vv. po dannym sfragistiki", *Byzantinobulgarica* 7 (1981), 455–67 at 462 (now in St. Petersburg).

¹⁶ Sandrovskaya, "Iz istorii Bolgarii", 463–4 (now in St. Petersburg); I. Iordanov, "Neizdadeni vizantiiski olovni pechati ot Silistra (IV)", *Izvestiia na Narodnii Muzei Varna* 28 [43] (1992), 229–45 at 232 (from Silistra); Iordanov, *Pechatite*, 154 (Melias, from Preslav).

¹⁷ N. Oikonomides, "Presthlavitza, the Little Preslav", *Südost-Forschungen* 42 (1983), 1–9. I am not convinced by the alternative suggestion that Presthlavitza is identical with Preslav, for which see P. Diaconu, "De nouveau à propos de Presthlavitza", *Südost-Forschungen* 46 (1987), 279–93.

¹⁸ For references to the ongoing excavations see S. Baraschi and O. Damian, "Considérations sur la céramique émaillée de Nuřaru", *Dacia* 37 (1993), 237–77.

¹⁹ I. Barnea, "Dinogetia et Noviodunum, deux villes byzantines du Bas-Danube," *Revue des études sud-est européennes* 9 (1971), 343–62; I. Barnea, "Les sceaux byzantins mis au jour à Noviodunum", in *SBS* 2, 153–61.

²⁰ I. Barnea, "Sceaux de deux gouverneurs inconnus du thème de Paristrion", *Dacia* 8 (1964), 245–7, which is dated *c.* 1000–1036. The latest research suggests that Capidava may have been occupied until 1048: see Madgearu, "Military Organization," 435.

Stray finds of anonymous *folles* at all of these sites—Preslav, Dristra, Presthlavitza/Nufăru, Dinogetia, Noviodunum, Capidava and Dervent—suggest that they were reoccupied by Byzantine troops during Basil's reign.²¹ 163 of the 1254 coins discovered during excavation at Nufăru were struck by Basil; at Dinogetia more than a quarter of the total finds (211 of 748) were his; and at Capidava more than half (43 of 85).²² However, given the relative length of Basil's reign compared of those of his immediate successors, the numbers of finds are not large. Therefore, we may surmise that the absence of a real threat to the region at this time allowed Basil to commit far more of his resources to recovering and occupying outlying regions in the north-western Balkans, to which we will turn shortly. Of particular note is the apparent redundance as a military installation of the most impressive project undertaken by Tzimiskes in the region. The mighty naval complex on an island known today as Păcuil lui Soare, opposite Dervent and just a few miles downstream from Dristra, was of little use once the threat of a further attack by the Rus along the river had disappeared.²³

It has been suggested that Basil created a ducate to oversee the activities of the various *strategoi* and their garrisons stationed in the north-eastern Balkans, distinct from that in the north-west which was occupied later and with greater effort.²⁴ However, there is as yet no

²¹ *Pace J. Haldon, Warfare, State and Society in the Byzantine World, 565–1204* (London, 1999), 64, who posits the abandonment of the defensive system at the lower Danube by Basil II. Total coin finds for several sites in Romania are conveniently tabulated in G. Mănușu-Adameșteanu, "Aspecte privind circulația monetară la Mangalia în secolele X–XI (969–1081)", *Pontica* 28–9 (1995–6), 287–300 at 294–9. For further references to individual sites and graphs illustrating coin finds to 1991 see P. Stephenson, "Byzantine policy towards Paristrion in the mid-eleventh century: another interpretation", *BMGS* 23 (1999), 43–66.

²² Mănușu-Adameșteanu, "Aspecte privind circulația monetară", 297–9; G. Custurea, "Catalogul monedelor bizantine anonime descoperite la Capidava", *Pontica* 28–9 (1995–6), 301–7. Slightly different figures are given in G. Custurea, *Circulația monedei bizantine în Dobrogea (sec. IX–XI)* (Constanța, 2000).

²³ P. Diaconu and D. Vilceanu, *Păcuil lui Soare, cetatea bizantină*, I (Bucharest, 1972), 27–46. The island appears to have flourished as a trading centre in the mid-eleventh century.

²⁴ For example, H.-J. Kühn, *Die byzantinische Armee im 10. und 11. Jahrhundert. Studien zur Organisation der Tagmata* (Vienna, 1991), 223–5, reflects this belief, assuming that the *strategos* of Dristra was in command of a 'ducate of Paristrion'. The next recorded incumbents of that office in Kühn's list date from the 1040s. For the transition from *strategos* to *doux* see J.-C. Cheynet, "Du stratège du thème au duc: chronologie de l'évolution au cours du XI^e siècle", *TM* 9 (1985), 181–94. The

conclusive evidence that a unified command linking the various small *themata* in Paristrion was created during Basil's reign, and this may reflect the relative peace and stability which prevailed in this recently volatile region. It would also suggest that the lower Danube region was, at least for a time, subject to the *strategos autokrator* of Bulgaria, based in Skopje.²⁵ We will return to this character later. The first indication of an independent command structure in Paristrion comes in the context of the Pecheneg wars fought in the reign of Constantine IX Monomachos (1042–55), when an individual took command of the forces stationed in 'Paradounavon'. We have the seals of several *katepanoi* of Paradounavon, which have all been dated later than c. 1045. A seal of one Michael *vestarches*, *katepano* of Paradounavon was probably struck by Michael Dokeianos, a general who was captured and killed by the Pechenegs.²⁶ Several seals struck by the *katepano* of Paradounavon Demetrios Katakalon, *patrikios*, *anthypatos* and *vestes* have been discovered at Dristra. This character may be the court dignitary not named by Attaleiates who achieved significant victories over the Pechenegs at Arkadiopolis and Rentakion before the dispute with the *pronoetes* of Bulgaria.²⁷ However, the historian may also be referring to a contemporary commander in the region, the *vestes* Symeon, who is known from seals with the legend '*vestes* and *katepano* of Paradounavon'.²⁸

latest important article on Basil's administrative reforms is L. Maksimović, "Organizacija Vizantijske vlasti u novoosvojenim oblastima posle 1018. godine", *ŽRVI* 36 (1997), 31–43.

²⁵ Much of the literature devoted to this issue has reflected modern national interests, and been concerned to demonstrate the independence of Paristrion (for which read the Dobrudja) from Bulgaria, or vice versa.

²⁶ Attaleiates, 34; G. Zacos and J. Nesbitt, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, II (Berne, 1984), 300; Iordanov, *Pechatite*, 143–4, favours an otherwise unattested Michael in the 1060s.

²⁷ Iordanov, *Pechatite*, 143–4.

²⁸ With such a title, he cannot have held this command in the 1020s as was claimed by N. Bănescu, *Les duchés byzantins de Paristrion (Paradounavon) et de Bulgarie* (Bucharest, 1946), 70. See now Madgearu, "Military organization", 426–9, who also argues that a further supposed governor of Paradounavon, Basil Apokapes, was in fact the commander of an eastern army transferred to Paristrion. Contra Bănescu, *Les duchés*, 84–8, who made the connection between Apokapes and Basil, *magistros tou Paradounabi*, mentioned in the will of Eustathios Boilas. See now M. Grünbart, "Die Familie Apokapes im Licht neuer Quellen", in *SBS* 5, 29–41 at 37–40. Several of his seals have been published, for example: I. Iordanov, "Neizdadeni vizantiiski olovni pechatii ot Silistra (III)", *Izvestiia na Narodniia Muzei Varna* 24 [39] (1988), 88–103 at 89–92.

Turning to the north-western frontier, as early as 1002 Basil II cast his gaze upon the Danubian lands west of Dristra. In that year he personally conducted an eight-month siege of Vidin.²⁹ Shortly afterwards a chieftain known as Achtum (in Hungarian, Ajtóny), whose lands stretched north to the river Körös/Caraș, was received by imperial officials at the recently recovered *kastron*. He was baptized according to the Orthodox rite, and subsequently founded a monastery in honour of St. John the Baptist at Morisena on the river Maros/Mureș.³⁰ There is evidence for the promotion of Orthodoxy in and around Szeged in the first quarter of the eleventh century, and we know from a rare charter that the monastery of St. Demetrios at Sirmium owned land in that district.³¹ The fullest account of Achtum's activities is contained in the *Vita Maior* of St. Gerard, which reveals further that he controlled the passage of salt along the Maros and Tisza to Szeged.³²

The established view of Basil's activities after the siege of Vidin sees the emperor constantly in the field waging a bloody war of attrition to wear down the manpower and defences of Samuel's Bulgaria.³³ However, alternative views have also been advanced, including my

²⁹ Skylitzes, 346.

³⁰ C. Bálint, *Südungarn im 10. Jahrhundert* (Budapest, 1991), 115–17; G. Kristó, "Ajtóny and Vidin", in G. Káldy-Nagy, ed., *Turkic-Bulgarian-Hungarian Relations (VIII–XIIth Centuries)*, *Studia Turco-Hungarica* 5 (Budapest, 1981), 129–35; F. Makk, "Relations Hungaro-Bulgares au temps du Prince Géza und du Roi Etienne Ier", in *Szegedi Bolgarisztika*, *Hungaro-Bulgarica* 5 (Szeged, 1994), 25–33. Achtum's 'ethnicity' is disputed by historians of Transylvania. For a critical overview of the region at this time, see now F. Curta, "Transylvania around the year 1000", in P. Urbanczyk (ed.), *Europe around the year 1000* (Warsaw, 2001), 141–65.

³¹ G. Györffy, "Das Güterverzeichnis des Klosters zu Szávaszentdemeter (Sremska Mitrovica) aus dem 12. Jahrhundert", *Studia Slavica* 5 (1959), 9–74 at 47; A. Kubinyi, "Handel und Entwicklung der Städte in der ungarischen Tiefebene im Mittelalter", in K.D. Grothusen and K. Zernack (eds.), *Europa Slavica—Europa Orientalis. Festschrift für K. Ludat* (Berlin, 1980), 423–44 at 427.

³² *Legenda Sancti Gerhardi Episcopi*, ed. I. Madzsar, in *Scriptores Rerum Hungaricarum*, ed. E. Szentpétery, II (Budapest, 1938), 461–506 at 490. The short and long Lives of Gerard (in Hungarian Gellért) have received much attention in Hungary, but the best English introduction remains C.A. Macartney, "Studies on the earliest Hungarian historical sources, I: the Lives of St. Gerard", *Archivum Europae Centro-Orientalis* 18 (1938), 1–35; repr. in his *Early Hungarian and Pontic History*, ed. L. Czigány & L. Péter (Aldershot, 1999).

³³ This view has been restated recently by S. Pirivatrić, *Samuilova Država. Obim i Karakter* (Belgrade, 1997), 104–33. See also M. Whittow, *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium, 600–1025* (London, 1996), 386–9.

own suggestion that Basil had no intention of conquering Bulgaria before 1014, and may even have signed a peace treaty with Samuel in 1005 recognizing the limits of his independent realm based on Ohrid and Prespa.³⁴ This suggestion begins with the statement by Yahya of Antioch that Basil was victorious after four years of fighting.³⁵ This corresponds exactly with the notion that the campaigns which began in 1001 were brought to an end by the events of 1005. It is perfectly possible that Basil was satisfied with his achievements to date, which included the recovery of the key coastal stronghold of Dyrrachium, the reopening of the Via Egnatia, and consolidation of his control north of Thessalonica. He was, therefore, content to leave Samuel with a realm based around Prespa and Ohrid, from which he could dominate the southern Slavs in Duklja and southern Dalmatia, but was denied access to the lands north and east of Sardica, and to Thessaly and the themes of Hellas and Peloponnesos. Samuel must also have kept his imperial title. Indeed, with the caution appropriate to any argument from silence, it is possible that Basil's agreement with Samuel has been erased from the written record to conceal the fact that the 'Bulgar-slayer' was previously a 'peacemaker' (*eirenopoios*). On my reading of the evidence, Basil recognized an independent and predominantly Slavic realm known as Bulgaria, but with its centres of power in Macedonia. This leaves us with the possibility that a peace treaty was signed which lasted for ten years (1005–1014). If so, Basil and Samuel must have recognized each other's political frontiers. But we cannot travel further down this road without further evidence: I believe we may find it in the *notitiae episcopatum*, notices of bishoprics subject to the patriarch of Constantinople.

Although these notices are notoriously difficult to date, making an absolute chronology impossible to establish, a firm relative chronology has been constructed. According to *notitia* 7, compiled at the beginning of the tenth century, the archbishopric of Dyrrachium had slipped to forty-second in the precedence list of metropolitan sees subject to Constantinople. The list of bishops suffragan to Dyrrachium

³⁴ Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, 66–77. The argument is developed in P. Stephenson, "The Byzantine Frontier in Macedonia", *Dialogos* 7 (2000), 23–40.

³⁵ Yahya, II, 461 (trans. B. Pirone [Milan, 1997], 226, §12:33). This is also noted by Whittow, *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium*, 389, 423; W. Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* (Stanford, 1997), 525.

had been reduced to just four: Stefaniaka (exact location unknown, but near Valona in Albania), Chounavia (exact location unknown, but between Dyrrachium and the river Mat), Kruja (modern Krujë), and Alessio (modern Lesh).³⁶ According to *notitia* 9—first completed in 946, and revised between 970 and 976—the status of Dyrrachium remained the same throughout the tenth century. However, its standing improved suddenly in *notitia* 10, when it was granted eleven more suffragan sees, bringing the total under the metropolitan to fifteen. These were Stefaniaka, Chounavia, Kruja, Alessio, Duklja, Skodra, Drisht, Polatum, Glavinica, Valona, Ulcinj, Bar, Chernik, and Berat (with Graditzion).³⁷ The date of *notitia* 10 cannot be ascertained precisely, but it certainly post-dates *notitia* 9, and must pre-date additional documents issued by Basil II in 1020, which stripped Dyrrachium of all the additional sees and granted them to Ohrid. (By 1020 Basil had finally defeated Samuel and his son, and recovered Ohrid and the surrounding territory for the empire.) Therefore, *notitia* 10 must date from the final years of the tenth, or, more likely, the first years of the eleventh century.³⁸

The reason for the short-lived promotion of the metropolitan of Dyrrachium has been the subject of speculation. However, if we accept that between 1005 and 1014 Basil acknowledged Samuel's political and ecclesiastical control over Ohrid, the brief promotion of Dyrrachium makes perfect sense: it was to serve as the centre of Byzantine ecclesiastical authority in the lands to the west of Samuel's realm, and as a check to encroachments from Ohrid. A complementary, but equally controversial feature of *notitia* 10, recension *a* (but not *c*), is the apparent consolidation of the authority of the bishop of Larissa in Thessaly.³⁹ Larissa temporarily acquired five

³⁶ *Notitiae episcopatum ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, ed. J. Darrouzès (Paris, 1981), 272, 286. This seventh extant notice is generally attributed to the patriarch of Constantinople Nicholas I Mystikos (901–7, 912–25).

³⁷ *Notitiae episcopatum*, 113–14, 330. The additional sees are recorded in two of the four recensions of *notitia* 10, being *a* (the oldest) and *c* (the most numerous). They are not recorded by recensions *b* and *d*. According to Darrouzès (*Notitiae episcopatum*, 117) contradictions between *ac* and *bd* are the most historically significant, and therefore one must choose which version is to be preferred. In coming to the choice presented here I have followed his advice that one must regard *a* as the 'conservateur' and the other recensions as 'évolutif'.

³⁸ *Notitiae episcopatum*, 103, 116–17, suggests in or after the later years of the tenth century, but sees no grounds to be more precise. The context for compilation suggested here would allow greater precision.

³⁹ *Notitiae episcopatum*, 110–11, 326–7, 339.

additional sees: Vesaina, Gardikion, Lestinos, Charmena and Peristerai. These are also recorded as suffragans of Larissa in a separate manuscript of the fifteenth century (Cod. Par. gr. 1362), which, Darrouzès suggests, was conflating information from several earlier documents which are now lost. Samuel had captured Larissa in 986 and for that reason the temporary extension of that see's authority in the early eleventh century would have acted as a complement to that of Dyrrachium, guarding against possible encroachments to the south from Ohrid. Therefore, the geographical distribution of the sees subject to both Dyrrachium and Larissa may be considered an illustration of the limits of Basil's political authority, which was concentrated in the coastal lands north and south of Dyrrachium, in the mountains to the west of Prespa and Ohrid, and in the lands south-east of Thessalonica.⁴⁰

So much then for Basil's and Samuel's political and ecclesiastical authority in Macedonia, and the frontiers between them. My suggestions are contentious because they rest on an argument from silence (because there is no account of the annual campaigns which Basil is alleged to have launched against Samuel between 1005 and 1014), and an episcopal notice (*notitia* 10) of uncertain date and questionable authority. Ultimately, one can accept or reject this hypothesis according to one's preferred view of the reign of Basil II. J. Shepard has advanced a nuanced interpretation which, while discounting the notion of a treaty, also stresses the difference between Basil's rhetoric of conquest and the apparent political and military realities he faced. Shepard suggests that Basil treated the Bulgars as a convenient "punchbag" against which to flex his army's muscles, demonstrate his own military leadership, and provide his troops with sources of loot and slaves. Full-scale conquest was his publicly stated aim, but his real aim was political and military stability in the face of his large standing army and the machinations of his own generals. The rhythm of manoeuvres and campaigning helped maintain equilibrium in Constantinople and Anatolia.⁴¹ Thus, the establishment

⁴⁰ V. von Falkenhausen, "Bishops", in G. Cavallo (ed.), *The Byzantines* (Chicago, 1997), 172–96, at 173: 'the organization of the ecclesiastical geography and hierarchy [was], almost inevitably, a reflection of secular organization'.

⁴¹ J. Shepard, "Byzantium Expanding, 944–1025", in T. Reuter (ed.), *New Cambridge Medieval History*, III, 586–604 at 599–601. Shepard will expand upon this in his forthcoming monograph *Byzantium Between Neighbours*. To be fair, Pirivatrić, *Samuilova*

of hegemony over the Bulgars in 1018 deprived Basil of further excuses for campaigning against them, and saw him return to the field in the east. It also saw the rebellion of several of his most trusted generals, including Nikephoros Xiphias and Nikephoros Phokas and, possibly, David Areianites, to whom we will return below.⁴²

It is possible, therefore, that for some of period Basil 1001–1018 was willing tacitly to recognize first Samuel's, and then John Vladislav's Bulgaria, and may even have contemplated, in 1005, establishing a client state between Thessalonica, Dyrrachium and Dalmatia. Ring-fenced by strategic alliances with potentates to the north and west, and by Basil's standing army to the south and east, Bulgaria was no longer a threat to the empire, but its collapse in 1018 demanded a radical reorganization of the north-western Balkans. Initially, this was an entirely military exercise, where *strategoï* enjoyed total control, and where supreme authority rested with the *strategos autokrator* of Bulgaria. The first such officer was the *patrikios* David Arianites.⁴³ His subordinates included the former *doux* of Thessalonica, the *patrikios* Constantine Diogenes, who in 1018 was designated commander in Sirmium (modern Sremska Mitrovica) and the neighbouring territories.⁴⁴ There is no evidence that these lands comprised one large composite, and independent *thema* of Western Paristrion, nor a *thema* of Sirmium-Serbia stretching from the Danube into the highlands west of the River Velika Morava. However, it is perfectly possible that Diogenes' title at this time was *strategos* of Serbia.⁴⁵

Država, 206–7, also notes that pitched battles were rare, and that Basil benefitted greatly politically from the prolonged clashes.

⁴² Skylitzes, 366–7; Forsyth, "The Byzantine-Arab Chronicle", II, 564–6. I. Duichev, *Prouchvaniia vvrkhu Bulgarskoto srednovekovie* (Sofia, 1945), 25–6, noted that, according to the *Life of St. Eugenios*, Basil II took hostage the grandson of David, *patrikios*, ruler of Bulgaria. This was probably to prevent his possible sedition. No rebellion occurred in Bulgaria.

⁴³ Skylitzes, 345, 350, 354–5, 358.

⁴⁴ Skylitzes, 366. Pace T. Wasilewski, "Le thème de Sirmium-Serbie au XI^e et XII^e siècles", *ŽRVI* 8 (1964), 465–82 at 474. Wasilewski correctly maintained that the southern Serbian lands remained in the hands of the native rulers. However, he also suggested that a large *thema* comprising Sirmium, 'Paristrion braničevien', and northern Serbia was entrusted to Constantine Diogenes after 1018. This rests on his translating ἀρχων τῶν ἐκεῖσε μερῶν as 'archonte du Paristrion braničevien'. This surely means no more than the hinterland of Sirmium.

⁴⁵ J. Nesbitt and N. Oikonomides, *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art*, I: *Italy, North of the Balkans, North of the Black Sea* (Washington DC, 1991), 102, no. 34.1. This is surely the same seal in the Fogg Collection noted by Laurent, "Le thème byzantin de Serbie", 190. So much was

Basil's efforts to consolidate authority in this region have, once again, left clear traces in the archaeological record. At Sirmium itself renovations were undertaken on the walls, and a garrison installed. Occupation was limited to a small area near the southern ramparts, where 26 class A2 anonymous bronze *folles* have been discovered. These coins probably reached the site in the purses of troops.⁴⁶ On the opposite bank of the Sava, at modern Mačvanska Mitrovica, a new episcopal church was built, the third on the site.⁴⁷ Similarly, a sixth-century church was renovated alongside the antique fortress of Taliata, known as Veliki Gradac (and today as Donji Milanovac), some way to the east of Sirmium.⁴⁸ The restoration of ramparts, and relatively large number of class A2 *folles* found there, suggest that Basil also installed a garrison at Belgrade.⁴⁹ Moreover, unpublished excavations at the ten hectare site at Margum, at the confluence of the rivers Velika Morava and Danube, have turned up several coins of the period and at least two seals.⁵⁰ Besides, perhaps, the restoration of stretches of the late antique ramparts, Margum seems not to have been redeveloped. Instead, the new, smaller fortress at Braničevo, at the confluence of the rivers Mlava and Danube, grew in importance through the eleventh century, and coins now in the national

suspected by Maksimović, "Organizacija Vizantijske vlasti", 39, who otherwise maintains that two distinct *themata* of Sirmium and Serbia had been created. I have suggested previously that a seal apparently struck by Constantine Diogenes as 'strategos of Serbia' may well relate to his being in command of the fortified city of Servia in northern Greece in 1001. This, however, must be incorrect since the city of Servia was almost always known in the neuter plural form, τὰ Σέρβια, and never as a feminine singular noun.

⁴⁶ V. Popović, "Catalogue des monnaies byzantines du musée de Srem", C. Brenot, N. Duval, V. Popović (eds.), *Études de numismatique danubienne: trésors, ingots, imitations, monnaies de fouilles, IV^e-XII^e siècle*, Sirmium 8 (Rome and Belgrade, 1978), 179-93 at 189-93.

⁴⁷ V. Popović, "L'évêché de Sirmium", in S. Ercegović-Pavlović (ed.), *Les nécropoles romaines et médiévales de Mačvanska Mitrovica*, Sirmium 12 (Belgrade, 1980), i-iv.

⁴⁸ M. Janković, *Srednjovekovno naselje na Velikom Gradcu u X-XI veku* (Belgrade, 1981), 21-3, 41-2, 75-8.

⁴⁹ V. Ivanešević, "Optičaj Vizantijski folisa XI. veka na prostoru centralnog Balkana", *Numizmatičar* 16 (1993), 79-92; M. Popović, *Beogradska Tvrđava* (Belgrade, 1982), 42-3.

⁵⁰ L. Maksimović and M. Popović, "Les sceaux byzantins de la région danubienne en Serbie, II," in *SBS* 3, 113-42 at 127-9. A seal struck by a *strategos* of Morava has been attributed to the commander of Margum: Nesbitt and Oikonomides, *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals*, I, 195. See also S. Pirivatrić, "Vizantijska tema Morava i 'Moravije' Konstantina VII Porfirogeneta", *ŽRIV* 36 (1997), 173-201.

museum at Požarevac suggest a brief Byzantine military presence associated with Basil's campaigns.⁵¹

There are, in marked contrast, no clear indications that Basil conquered the interior highlands south of the Danube and west of the Velika Morava, namely Raška (today, in English, the Sanjak) and Bosna (Bosnia). A seal struck by a *strategos* of Ras has been convincingly dated to Tzimiskes' reign, and may indicate Basil's predecessor enjoyed a brief period of recognition in Raška.⁵² This is apparently confirmed by the *Chronicle of the Priest of Duklja*.⁵³ Moreover, although seals have demonstrated that a *thema* of Serbia existed briefly—perhaps, as we have seen above, relating to the recovery of Sirmium in 1018—it never truly compromised the local Slavic power structure. N. Oikonomides suggested that we must see the *thema* of Serbia as having existed somewhere to the north of Bulgaria, but only briefly before authority passed swiftly back to the local aristocracy.⁵⁴ I would wish to modify this, and to state that if the idea of developing a *thema* of Serbia existed briefly, it was swiftly abandoned and the title passed to the local aristocracy. In a charter issued in July 1039 the Slavic ruler of Zahumlje styled himself 'Ljutovit,

⁵¹ V. Ivanešević, "Vizantijski novac (491–1092) iz zbirke narodnog muzeja u Požarevcu", *Numizmatičar* 11 (1988), 87–99; M. Popović & V. Ivanišević, "Grad Braničevo u srednjem veku", *Starinar* 39 (1988), 125–79 at 130. The importance of Braničevo was linked to that of the Hungarian fortress of Haram on the opposite bank.

⁵² Nesbitt and Oikonomides, *Catalogue of Seals*, I, 101–2; J. Kalić, "La région de Ras à l'époque byzantine", in Ahrweiler (ed.), *Géographie historique du monde méditerranéen*, 127–40.

⁵³ *Chronicle of the Priest of Duklja*, Latin version, ch. 30, where it is stated that Tzimiskes 'conquered the whole of Bulgaria which he subjected to his imperial rule. He then returned to his palace and relinquished command of his army. However, those in charge led the army to capture the whole province of Raška'. *Letopis Popa Dukljanina*, ed. F. Šišić (Belgrade and Zagreb, 1928), 324. J. Ferluga, "Die Chronik des Priesters von Diocleia als Quelle für die byzantinische Geschichte", *Bužavrtiva* 10 (1980), 429–60, argues for the greater credibility of the Latin text after chapter 30, and for its utility for historians of the Byzantine Balkans. Ferluga has used the source frequently: see the index of his collected studies: *Byzantium on the Balkans. Studies on the Byzantine Administration and the Southern Slavs from the VIIIth to the XIIIth Centuries* (Amsterdam, 1976), 458, "Priest of Diocleia, Chronicle of the". On the value of the chronicle in general see now: L. Steindorff, "Die Synode auf der Planities Dalmae. Reichseinteilung und Kirchenorganisation im Bild der Chronik des Priesters von Diocleia", *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 93 (1985 [1986]), 279–324; L. Steindorff, "Deutungen des Wortes *Dalmatia* in der mittelalterlichen Historiographie. Zugleich über die Synode auf der *Planities Dalmae*", in *Etnogeneza Hrvata*, ed. N. Budak (Zagreb, 1996), 250–61.

⁵⁴ Nesbitt and Oikonomides, *Catalogue of Seals*, I, 101.

protospatharios epi tou Chrysotrikliniou, *hypatos* and *strategos* of Serbia and Zahumlje'.⁵⁵ Ljutovid's claim to be *strategos* not only of Zahumlje, but all Serbia suggests that he had been courted by the emperor, and awarded nominal rights over neighbouring lands, including Duklja which was at the time at war with the empire. Moreover, if we can trust the *Chronicle of the Priest of Duklja*, our only narrative source, we must conclude that none of the Serbian lands was under direct Byzantine control in 1042.⁵⁶ In that year, we are told, the *ban* of Bosna, the *župan* of Raška, and the Slavic *princeps* of Zahumlje (Chelmana), Ljutovid, received Byzantine ambassadors offering piles of imperial silver and gold to support imperial efforts against the ruler of neighbouring Duklja, Stefan Vojislav.⁵⁷ The use of the Latin *princeps*, rather than *iupanus* or *banus*, to describe Ljutovid, supports the notion that he held the supreme authority among the Serbs at that time. However, this may merely reflect his closer association with Byzantium, which may in turn be a consequence of Zahumlje's proximity to Duklja.

Beyond Serbia authority was similarly exercised by local notables who were willing, at least in principle, to recognise Basil's overlordship. Thus, a seal has come to light which bears the legend 'Leo, imperial *spatharokandidatos* and [...] of Croatia'. Unlike in the case of Serbia, nobody has seriously suggested that a Byzantine *thema* of Croatia was created at this time, and the most likely reconstruction of the lacuna is *archon*.⁵⁸ The use of the name Leo may suggest that

⁵⁵ V. von Falkenhausen, "Eine byzantinische Beamtenurkunde aus Dubrownik", *BZ* 63 (1970), 10–23. This article puts beyond doubt—doubt expressed by many, including V. Laurent, "Le thème byzantin de Serbie au XI^e siècle", *REB* 15 (1957), 185–95—that the body of this charter and the intitulature are authentic and belong together. Cf. E. Malamut, "Concepts et réalités: recherches sur les termes désignant les Serbes et les pays Serbes dans les sources byzantines des X^e–XII^e siècles", in *EYΨYXIA. Mélanges Offerts à Hélène Ahrweiler*, 439–57 at 442, n. 33: "Cet article [von Falkenhausen] ... met fin à la contestation de l'existence du stratège de Serbie".

⁵⁶ Pace Laurent, "Le thème byzantin de Serbie", 191–2.

⁵⁷ *Chronicle of the Priest of Duklja*, Latin version, ch. 38: "Audiens praeterea Graecorum imperator quod e venerat, ira magna et tristis animo effectis, misit statim legatos cum auro et argento non modico, ut darent iupano Rassae et bano Bosnae et principi regionis Chelmana, ut mitterent exercitum et gentem supra regem [Vojislav]". *Letopis Popa Dukljanina*, ed. Šišić, 346–7.

⁵⁸ Nesbitt & Oikonomides, *Catalogue of Seals*, I, 48–9. For the seal of a further Slavic noble granted a Byzantine title and, apparently, a military command at this time: Zacos and Nesbitt, *Seals*, II, 460, no. 1089: Vladzertzes, *magistros* and *katepano* of Mesembria. This was certainly within lands now under direct Byzantine control. See also Bănescu, *Les duchées*, 136–7, for the seal of one Tzourvaneles, *patrikios*, *strategos* of Bulgaria.

the Croat in question had taken a Byzantine name, or a bride, or been baptised by the emperor, or by one of his subordinates. We have examples of all such eventualities in the Balkan lands recovered by Basil.⁵⁹ Moreover, in a parallel situation to that of Ljutovid in Serbia, a certain Slav named Dobronja, who also went by the name Gregory, appears to have accepted Byzantine money and titles in recognition of his authority in the northern Dalmatian lands. Charters preserved in Zadar show that he had been granted the rank of *protospatharios* and the title *strategos* of all Dalmatia. Kekaumenos records that he travelled twice to Constantinople as *archon* and *toparch* of Zadar and Split before 1036, when he was taken prisoner and later died in the *praitorion*.⁶⁰ Dobronja's change of fortunes may have been a consequence of, or alternatively the cause of, the rebellion by a further native ruler who had recognised Byzantine overlordship: that is, the aforementioned Stefan Vojislav of Duklja, who also went by the title *archon* and 'toparch of the *kastra* in Dalmatia, Zeta and Ston'.⁶¹

The affairs of the Dalmatians, Croats, Serbs and others, were overseen from both south-west and south-east by Byzantine *strategoi* in key outposts. The Byzantine governors in Skopje and Dyrrachium both took a keen interest in the activities of the Serbs, and both Dobronja and Vojislav had regular dealings with the *strategos* of Dubrovnik. On the occasion that this last office was held by a certain Katakalon, Vojislav took the opportunity of his own son's baptism to kidnap the *strategos*, who had come to act as Godfather, and his party.⁶² This suggests a close, if formal, working relationship between native elites and Byzantine officers in this peripheral zone of the empire after Basil's 'reconquest'. Moreover, a line of small watchtowers studded the passes through the Zygos mountains, marking the limits of direct Byzantine authority west of the Velika Morava corridor between Skopje and Niš. Excavations or surveys have identified several fortresses constructed or rebuilt in the eleventh century, including those at, from south to north, Lipljan, Zvečan, Galič, Jeleč,

⁵⁹ Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, 74–7, 123–30.

⁶⁰ *Cecaumeni Strategicon*, ed. B. Wassiliewsky and Jernstedt (St. Petersburg, 1896), 77–8; *Sovety i rassказы Kekavmena. Sochinenie Vizantiiskogo polkovodtsa XI veka*, ed. G.G. Litavrin (Moscow, 1972), 300–2. Henceforth: Kekaumenos.

⁶¹ Kekaumenos, ed. Wassiliewsky and Jernstedt, 27–8; ed. Litavrin, 170–2.

⁶² Ibid.

Ras and Brvenik.⁶³ It seems certain that this defensive line was established following Basil's campaigns to mark the internal frontier between Byzantine Bulgaria and semi-autonomous Serbia. The former was to be governed directly from Skopje and its subordinate command posts, the latter was to comprise a series of client 'principalities' in the highlands between the productive interior and the external frontier at the Danube-Sava. In the later eleventh century we know that a no-man's-land stretched to the west of these fortresses, between the Serbian lands and the newly-constituted *thema* of Niš-Braničevo.⁶⁴ This is first mentioned in the context of Alexios I's campaigns, although we have the earlier seal of one Nikephoros Lykaon (or Lalakon), *protospatharios* and *strategos* of Niš.⁶⁵

Arianites' military successors included the aforementioned Constantine Diogenes, who may have taken overall command in the northern Balkans as early as 1022. His subordinate was the previously unnoted 'Christopher, *protospatharios*, *epi tou koitonos* and *katepano* of Bulgaria and Thessalonica'.⁶⁶ This is almost certainly Christopher Burgaris (perhaps signifying that he was Bulgarian, but also known as Baragis), known from an inscription in the church of Panagia Chalkeon in Thessalonica, who was transferred to Italy in 1027–8. Diogenes was still in overall command of both Sirmium and Bulgaria when he was sent against the Pechenegs in 1027, before Constantine VIII transferred him to Thessalonica (hence, coinciding with the departure of Christopher).⁶⁷ The discovery of his seal bearing the legend 'Constantine Diogenes *anthypatos*, *patrikios* and *doux* of Thessalonica, Bulgaria and Serbia', suggests that he retained nominal control over his northern command, stretching south from Sirmium to Niš and Skopje, as

⁶³ M. Popović, "Les fortresses du system défensif byzantin en Serbie au XI^e–XII^e siècle", *Starinar* 42 (1991), 169–85; Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, 125, 148–50, esp. map 4.5.

⁶⁴ *Anne Comnène, Alexiade*, ed. B. Leib, II (Paris, 1940), 166–7; English trans. E.R.A. Sewter, *The Alexiad of Anna Comnena* (Harmondsworth, 1969), 276. On the established Roman use of *agri deserta* beyond the linear frontier, see D. Potter, "Empty areas and Roman frontier policy", *American Journal of Philology* 113 (1992), 269–74.

⁶⁵ Nesbitt and Oikonomides, *Catalogue of Seals*, I, 100.

⁶⁶ Zacos and Nesbitt, *Seals*, II, 429, nr. 969, who identify this man with the *katepano* of Langobardia in 1028, said to have come from Bulgaria in the *La cronaca Siculo-Saracena di Cambridge con doppio testo greco*, ed. G. Cozza-Luzi (Palermo, 1890), 86. Cf. V. von Falkenhausen, *La dominazione bizantina nell'Italia dal IX all'XI secolo*, 2nd ed. (Bari, 1978), 91, 201.

⁶⁷ Skylitzes, 376.

well as in Thessalonica.⁶⁸ In effect, his grand title was an alternative to *strategos autokrator* of Bulgaria. However, there is reason to believe that his withdrawal from Sirmium signalled that this region too would now be controlled by locals. For example, at Belgrade, twenty-one class A2 anonymous *folles* were discovered dating from Basil II's reign, as we have noted, but thereafter only two further coins for the whole eleventh century.⁶⁹ This suggests that the Byzantine troops had been withdrawn. Moreover, a saint's life similarly suggests that around 1030 the *kastron* at Belgrade was under the control of a local magnate (*princeps*) who prevented the blessed Symeon from proceeding on his planned journey to Western Europe.⁷⁰

The strong defensive line, no-man's-land, and the ring of clients without, allowed the early development of the institutions of the civilian and ecclesiastical administration in the secure *thema* of Bulgaria, based on Skopje and Ohrid. Basil famously issued three *sigillia* in c.1020 which demonstrate how the ecclesiastical structure of the province was to reorganised based on the archbishopric at Ohrid.⁷¹ After 1042 an official known as the *pronoetes* of (all) Bulgaria was installed in Skopje.⁷² The first known *pronoetes*, the eunuch and monk

⁶⁸ I. Swiencickij, "Byzantinische Bleisiegel in den Sammlungen von Lwow", *Sbornik v pamet na Prof. Nikov* (Sofia, 1940), 439–40, no. 11. For the corrected reading see V. L[aurant], a short note in *BZ* 58 (1965), 220; Laurent, "Le thème byzantin de Serbie", 189

⁶⁹ Popović, *Beogradska Tvrđava* (cited above, n. 49), 42–3. Pace Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, 177–8, Belgrade was probably back under direct Byzantine control at the time of the passage of the First Crusade, and subsequently a new stone fortress was constructed. On 1096, and the presence of a Byzantine general, Niketas Karikes, *doux* and *protoproedros*, see now G. Prinzing, "Zu Odessos/Varna (im 6. Jh.), Belgrad (1096) und Braničevo (um 1163). Klärung dreier Fragen aus Epigraphik, Prosopographie und Sphragistik", *Bsl* 56 (1995), 219–25 at 220–4. Karikes is said to have consulted with notable locals, and was possibly still acting in the capacity of *doux* of Bulgaria, for which see the following note.

⁷⁰ *Ex Miraculis Sancti Symeonis Auctore Ebervino*, ed. G. Waitz, MGH Scriptores 8 (Hanover, 1868), 210. For the date of 1030 see W. Wattenbach, *Deutschland Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter*, II (Berlin, 1939), 174. A Byzantine governor may be referred to as *princeps*, as was Karikes in 1096 (see previous note). However, this appears to have been a Latin rendering of his rank (*proto*)*proedros*.

⁷¹ H. Gelzer, "Ungedruckte und wenig bekannte Bistümerverzeichnisse der orientalischen Kirche", *BZ* 2 (1893), 22–72. These three *sigillia* have only been preserved appended to a later chrysobull, apparently issued in 1272, and then only in one of four manuscripts containing the chrysobull (Cod. Sinait. 508 (976), 17th century). Two further manuscripts contain only a part of the first *sigillon*, and a third, a Slavonic translation of the chrysobull, nothing.

⁷² The exact meaning of *pronoetes* in this context is unclear. For suggestions see

Basil, even took command of the Bulgarian expeditionary force sent against the Pechenegs in 1048.⁷³ Subsequently a civilian administrator known as the *praitor* operated alongside the *doux* of Bulgaria. The *praitor* John Triakontaphyllos held the elevated rank of *protoproedros*, which was introduced c. 1060,⁷⁴ and he may well have been a contemporary of Gregory, *protoproedros* and *doux* of Bulgaria.⁷⁵ Other eleventh-century *doukes* of Bulgaria include Nikephoros Vatatzes *proedros* and Niketas Karykes.⁷⁶ There is also an unpublished seal in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford which was struck by a certain Andronikos Philokales, *vestarches* and *katepano*, perhaps during his tenure as *catepan* of Bulgaria from c. 1065.⁷⁷

The judgement of Psellos, with which we began, rests on the assumption that the frontier was a fixed line which should resist barbarian assaults. Psellos' inherited this view from his intellectual forebears through his classical education, and not through contemporary observation.⁷⁸ In fact, as we have seen, the frontier in the northern Balkans was both a fixed line and a series of regions between that external boundary and the empire's productive heartland. The fixed line itself, at the Danube, was always permeable and several varieties

ODB, III, 1733; N. Oikonomides, "L'évolution de l'organisation administrative de l'empire byzantin au XI^e siècle (1025–1118)", *TM* 6 (1976), 125–52 at 149–50.

⁷³ Kekaumenos, ed. Wassiliewsky and Jernstedt, 24; ed. Litavrin, 164, for Basil the *pronoetes Boulgaron*. Attaleiates, 37, calls Basil the *satrapes* of Bulgaria. Bănescu, *Les duchés*, 139–41; Kühn, *Die byzantinische Armee*, 229. See also G. Schlumberger, *Sigillographie de l'empire byzantin* (Paris, 1884), 740–1, for a seal of the *pronoetes pases Boulgarias*.

⁷⁴ Oikonomides, "L'évolution de l'organisation administrative", 126; ODB, III, 1727.

⁷⁵ Nesbitt and Oikonomides, *Catalogue of Seals*, I, 94–5.

⁷⁶ Nesbitt and Oikonomides, *Catalogue of Seals*, I, 94, no. 29.3; H. Hunger, "Zehn unedierte byzantinischen Beamten-Siegel", *JÖB* 17 (1968), 179–95 at 186–7, no. 9; Cf. Cheynet, 409; Prinzing, "Klärung dreier Fragen", 223, n. 21.

⁷⁷ Kekaumenos, ed. Wassiliewsky and Jernstedt, 72; ed. Litavrin, 264; Bănescu, *Les duchés*, 144; Kühn, *Die byzantinische Armee*, 230. The seal is no. 32 in Marlia Mundell Mango's unpublished catalogue, and I am grateful to her for providing me with a copy.

⁷⁸ S. Mattern, *Rome and the Enemy. Imperial Strategy in the Principate* (Berkeley, 1999) is a provocative interpretation of Roman strategy under the principate which emphasises the role of elite education in the conception of frontiers and the formulation of foreign policy. See also P. Stephenson, "Byzantine conceptions of otherness after the annexation of Bulgaria (1018)", in D. Smythe, (ed.), *Strangers to Themselves: The Byzantine Outsider* (Aldershot, 2000), 245–57.

of 'barbarian' resided within. As John Haldon has stated recently, 'linear distinctions had little or no military relevance [in Byzantium] and were only of limited strategic value'.⁷⁹ The establishment and maintenance of small garrisoned outposts, in Haldon's terminology 'hard points', could not prevent large incursions from without, nor could they entirely suppress unrest within the frontier regions. One need only compare the few 'hard points' restored by Basil with the far greater number of legionary and auxiliary forts, fortresses and watchtowers that marked the Roman *limes* in Moesia Inferior and Superior, later Moesia Secunda and Dacia Ripensis, to understand how futile a Byzantine policy based on a static defensive line would have been.⁸⁰ It has been estimated that at the end of his second Dacian war, Trajan had stationed half his total forces, some 200,000 troops, at the middle and lower Danube, whereas Basil's total forces never numbered more than 110,000 across the whole empire.⁸¹ What chance then would far fewer Byzantine troops guarding far fewer

⁷⁹ Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society*, 61, 63. A. Madgearu, "Dunărea în epoca bizantină (secolele X–XII): o frontieră permeabilă", *Revista Istorică*, new series 10/1–2 (1999), 41–55, argues similarly for a permeable frontier at the lower Danube. I am grateful to Dr Madgearu for providing me with this and additional works by him and G. Custurea.

⁸⁰ Pace J. Ferluga, "I confini dell'Impero romano d'Oriente. Nozione e realtà", in *Popolo e spazio romano tra diritto e profezia. Da Roma alla terza Roma*, Documenti e studi, III (Naples, 1986), 365–400 at 385; repr. in J. Ferluga, *Untersuchungen zur byzantinischen Provinzverwaltung. VII–XIII Jahrhundert* (Amsterdam, 1992), 1–36 at 21: 'La frontiera sul Danubio fu originizzata . . . di arrestare le incursioni barbare particolarmente frequenti all'epoca'. A representative selection from the vast literature on the Roman frontier: M. Zahariade, "The structure and functioning of the lower Danube limes in the 1st–3rd centuries A.D.", in J. Fitz (ed.), *Limes. Akten des XI. Internationalen Limeskongresses (Székesfehérvár, 30.8.–6.9.1976)* (Budapest, 1977), 385–98; G. Gomolka, "Zur Siedlungsgeschichte am Spätromischen Limes in Moesia inferior", in E. Birley, B. Dobson, M. Jarrett (eds.), *Roman Frontier Studies 1969. International Congress of Limesforschung*, (Cardiff, 1974), 212–25; T. Ivanov, "Archäologische Forschungen der römischen und frühbyzantinischen Donaulimes in Bulgarien", *ibid.*, 235–43; V. Velkov, "Der römische Limes in Bulgarien während der Spätantike", *Studii Clasice* 3 (1961), 241–9, repr. in his *Roman Cities in Bulgaria. Collected Studies* (Amsterdam, 1980), 199–207; P. Petrovic, "Les fortresses du Bas-empire sur les limes Danubiens en Serbie", in W. Hanson & J. Keppie (eds.), *Roman Frontier Studies 1979*, III (Oxford, 1980), 757–74; von Bulow & Milcheva (eds.), *Der Limes an der unteren Donau von Diokletian bis Heraklios* (see above, n. 11). It has recently been remarked that, despite the impressive archaeological evidence for defensive installations in depth, '[Roman] literary sources . . . virtually do not recognize the idea of defensible frontiers'. See Mattern, *Rome and the Enemy*, 115.

⁸¹ K. Strobel, *Untersuchungen zu den Dakerkriegen Trajans. Studien zur Geschichte des mittleren und unteren Donaupraumes in der hohen Kaiserzeit* (Bonn, 1984), 153–4; Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society*, 103.

fortifications have had at preventing raids by highly mobile bands of nomads? Moreover, when attacks did occur, the smaller Byzantine watchtowers were themselves targets because of the relative riches within. So much is demonstrated by the destruction of numerous sites including Capidava and Dervent by the Pechenegs in 1036.⁸² However, this happened after Basil's death, and after elements of his system had begun to be dismantled, for example the withdrawal from Sirmium. During his reign it is clear that such raids did not occur, and this was a mixture of luck, diplomacy and fear.

Basil was lucky. As we have noted above, the collapse of the Buyids and political fragmentation in the Caucasus allowed him to secure the eastern front by a treaty with the Fatimids. By doing so he was freed to transfer his forces to the north-west, and therefore to campaign at length in the Balkans. Despite Basil's impressive standing army, it was impossible for him, as it was for any emperor of the middle Byzantine period, to fight simultaneously on two fronts. Therefore, with the exception of Tzimiskes' brief reign, for the first time in centuries imperial forces were mustered for an offensive campaign in Bulgaria. And here Basil was once again fortunate: the aforementioned struggle between the Pechenegs and Rus distracted both peoples from contemplating an assault on the lower Danube, where the Rus had so recently attacked, and the Pechenegs eventually would. Therefore, Basil was able to concentrate his forces in the western Balkans, that is against Samuel. We cannot know much of this luck was created, but the strategy of 'divide and rule' famously outlined in *De administrando imperio* allows us at least to consider the possibility that Basil's agents fomented the tension between Rus and Pechenegs. In any event, Basil enjoyed a closer relationship with the Rus by virtue of the marriage of his sister in 988 to the Kievan Prince Vladimir, and when the Pechenegs did advance upon the lower Danube in 1017 the threat was averted by negotiation. Basil despatched one Tzotzikios the Iberian, who convinced the nomads to remain north of the Danube, and no attacks were launched across the river until 1027, two years after Basil's death.⁸³ Similarly, as we have seen, good relations with those settled across the Danube at

⁸² For a list of excavated sites which show evidence of Pecheneg destruction see Madgearu, "Military organization", 435.

⁸³ Skylitzes, 356.

Vidin and in Transylvania were ensured diplomatically, by the baptism of Achtum and the promotion of Orthodox Christianity in his territories. Basil later secured a military alliance with King Stephen of Hungary, who is said to have provided troops to assist in the recovery of Ohrid in 1018.⁸⁴

Diplomacy was not reserved for dealings with 'external' powers. Within the empire, Basil's advance is marked not so much by a trail of blood as of alliances. It is evident from reading Skylitzes' abbreviated account of Basil's early campaigns, in 1001–5, that control was achieved by securing the support of the leading man (*proteuon*) in a *kastron*, and the ruler (*archon*) of a district. And in this struggle Basil's greatest weapon was his capacity to award lofty imperial titles, with their associated insignia, stipends and prestige. Thus, Berroia came with the loyalty of Dobromir, who was a relative of Samuel by marriage, and who received the rank of *anthypatos*. Similarly, Servia was handed over by the commander Nikolitzas, who was taken to Constantinople and given the rank of *patrikios*. Unlike Dobromir, he proved fickle, and fled back to Samuel. A further prize, Skopje, came with Romanos, the son of the former Bulgarian Tsar Peter, whom Samuel had installed there as governor. Romanos, who had taken the name Symeon, was promoted to the rank of *patrikios praipositos* and given an imperial command in the city of Abydos on the Hellespont. Then, and crucially, in 1005 Dyrrachium, the great stronghold on the Adriatic, was returned to Byzantine suzerainty by the leading family, the Chryselioi, who had previously acknowledged Samuel. Since Samuel was married to a daughter of John Chryselios, the *proteuon* of Dyrrachium, the change in loyalty was even more remarkable. Chryselios did so in exchange for imperial recognition for his two sons as *patrikioi*.⁸⁵ The policy was repeated following the renewal of intensive campaigning in 1014. Thus, Skylitzes notes, a certain Dragomouzos ceded Serres and the region of Strumica in exchange for the title *patrikios*.⁸⁶ The denouement of this process is described by Yahya of Antioch:

⁸⁴ G. Györffy, "Zur Geschichte der Eroberung Ochrids durch Basileios II.," in *Actes du XII^e Congrès international des études byzantines, Ochride, 10–16 septembre 1961*, II (Belgrade, 1964), 149–54; F. Makk, "Relations Hungaro-Bulgares", 30–1.

⁸⁵ Skylitzes, 349.

⁸⁶ Skylitzes, 357, 365.

All the Bulgarian chieftains came to meet Basil, and brought with them the wife and children of the Bulgarian ruler Aaron. The emperor took possession of their fortresses, but showed himself to be well disposed towards them by awarding each an appropriate title. He preserved intact powerful fortresses, installing in them Greek governors, and razed others. He re-established order in Bulgaria, naming *basilikoi*, functionaries charged with the administration of finances and state revenues. In this way the kingdom of Bulgaria was annexed to the empire of *rūm* and transformed into a catepanate. In the forty-fourth year of his reign the emperor returned to Constantinople.⁸⁷

The final element in Basil's policy towards the Balkan frontier was fear. If the loyalty of the Bulgaria magnates was bought with titles and stipends, it was maintained by fear of reprisal should they err. Basil cultivated his image as a fearsome warrior and general, and wished to be remembered as such. His verse epitaph, originally an inscription on his sarcophagus but now preserved only in four manuscripts dating from the late thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, states that no-one saw his spear lie still during his fifty-year reign.⁸⁸ To consolidate his image, and to keep his subjects in fearful subjection, Basil performed occasional acts of great brutality. The most notorious atrocity was that at the pass of Kleidion ('the little key') in 1014, where the emperor is said to have blinded 14, 000 (or 15,000) of Samuel's men, leaving a single eye to one in each hundred who might thereby lead his comrades home.⁸⁹ It has often been noted that Basil could not have blinded so many troops, who were in any event merely a division guarding a pass, since this would sorely have depleted the Bulgarian army; an army which fought on for four years after Kleidion, and Samuel's death.⁹⁰ However, whether or not Basil truly did mutilate that number of men is less significant than the fact that he was believed to have done so. Basil's reputation as the 'Bulgar-slayer' entered the written record only later, but there

⁸⁷ Yahya, III, 406–7. Yahya here confuses John Vladislav with his father, Aaron. Cf. *Cronache dell'Egitto fātimide*, trans. Pirone, 284, §13:46–7. This passage is also quoted in French translation by Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations*, 387–8.

⁸⁸ S.G. Mercati, "Sull'epitafio di Basilio II Bulgaroctonos", in his *Collectanea Byzantina*, II (Bari, 1970), 226–31. This is quoted in English translation by Shepard, "Byzantium Expanding, 944–1025", 594.

⁸⁹ Skylitzes, 348–9; Kekaumenos, ed. Wasiliewsky and Jernstedt, 18; ed. Litavrin, 152.

⁹⁰ Recent skepticism: Whittow, *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium*, 388. Cf. Mattern, *Rome and the Enemy*, 33, 106, for the rhetorical distortion of casualties.

can be no doubt that stories of his victories and atrocities circulated widely during his reign, and remained in circulation for years after.⁹¹ In the *Life of St Nikon*, composed in southern Greece around 1050, Basil is considered 'the most fortunate of all emperors . . . [whose] life was famous and time of his rule the longest, and his trophies over opponents quite numerous'. It is further noted that by his hand 'the nation of the numberless Bulgarian phalanx was struck down and humbled, as the story about him shows in fuller detail'.⁹² This must refer to the story of the blindings at Kleidion.

Samuel could inspire dread and loyalty himself, of course, and Skopje, for example, was back in the Tsar's hands some time after Romanos' defection in 1004 and before Areianites' installation there in 1018. Nevertheless, so long as Basil was in command of a large field army stationed within striking distance of their lands, recognition of his suzerainty was generally forthcoming from the native aristocracy, and for the same reason the 'Scythian' peoples beyond the frontier did not contemplate assaults across the Danube into imperial territory. Once Bulgaria had been annexed, large rebellions in the western Balkans did not arise until the 1040s, and these were a consequence of the increasing fiscalization of the region, perhaps as a response to cash shortages and demands to redirect both cash and manpower to the north-eastern Balkans. Resources were diverted to the north-east because that frontier was now under threat by the Pechenegs, who launched their first raid just two years after Basil's death. This was the situation that prevailed when Psellos looked back rhetorically on a reality that had never existed. Contrary to Psellos' judgement, it was never the 'towns and fortresses constructed by men' which physically prevented nomad incursions. Instead 'the barbarian who rode his mount as far as these' was reminded that to pass beyond that line was to enter the realm of the warrior emperor Basil, and therefore was to risk his terrifying reprisal.⁹³ For this reason they turned back, 'not daring to advance further into [Byzantine]

⁹¹ P. Stephenson, "The legend of Basil the Bulgar-slayer", *BMGS* 24 (2000), 102–32.

⁹² *The Life of St Nikon*, ed. and trans. D.F. Sullivan (Brookline, Mass., 1987), 140–3, 148–51.

⁹³ Cf. Mattern, *Rome and the Enemy*, 116–22, for the importance of reprisal, and fear of it, in defending the Roman frontier. See also W. Haase, "'Si vis pacem, para bellum': Zur Beurteilung militärischer Stärke in der römischen Kaiserzeit", in Fitz (ed.), *Limes*, 721–55.

lands'. Basil's rhetoric thus had become reality, and after his death it became a rod with which to beat his 'civilian' successors who may have had equal diplomatic resources, but lacked Basil's luck with regard to the strategic situation beyond the frontiers, and allowed the psychological deterrent to invasion rapidly to evaporate.

We began with the observation that Psellos' conception of the Danube frontier owed more to his classical learning than to his interpretation of recent history in the northern Balkans. It seems appropriate, therefore, to end with the words of an orator of the fourth century, whose works Psellos certainly will have read: Themistios, *On the peace of Valens*:

What divides the Scythians and the Romans is not a river, nor a swamp, nor a wall, for these one might break through, sail across or surmount, but fear, which no-one has ever surmounted who believed that he was the weaker.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ *Themistii Orationes quae supersunt*, ed. G. Downey, I (Leipzig, 1965), 195–214 at 210–11 (10.38); cited by Mattern, *Rome and the Enemy*, 115. On knowledge and appreciation of Themistios in Byzantium see Photius, *Bibliothèque*, I, 152–3. This conclusion owes much to the thesis of E. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire* (Baltimore, 1976), summed up at 3: 'Above all, the Romans clearly realized that the dominant dimension of power was not physical but psychological—the product of others' perceptions of Roman strength rather than the use of this strength'.

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BETWEEN TWO EMPIRES: BYZANTINE ITALY IN THE REIGN OF BASIL II

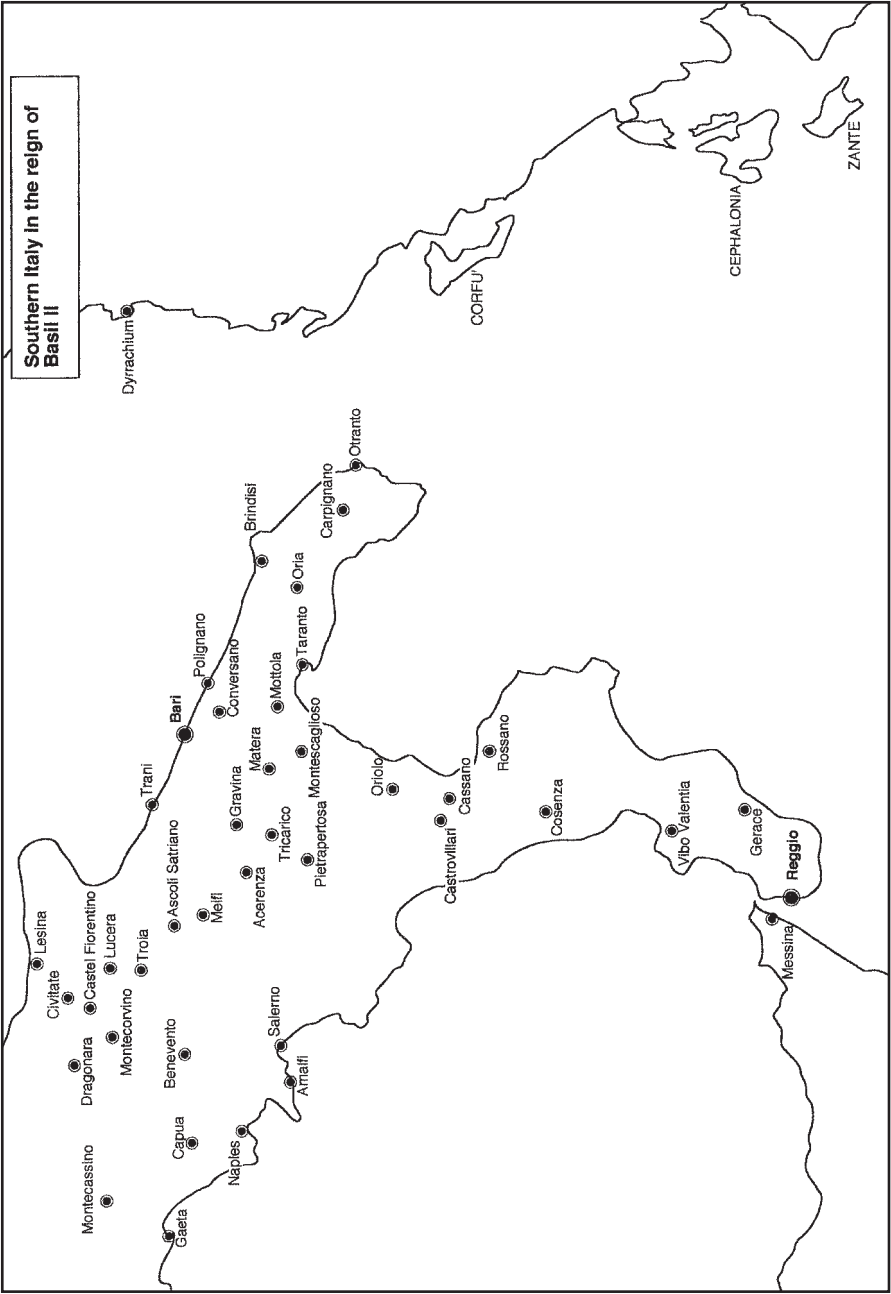
Vera von Falkenhausen

This paper seeks to analyse the political interplay between Byzantium and Italy in the time of Basil II (976–1025). The geographical area to be considered includes, in addition to the strictly Byzantine territory in Southern Italy, the Catepanate of *Italia* and the theme of *Kalabria*, the neighbouring Lombard principalities of Benevento, Capua and Salerno and the Tyrrhenian duchies of Naples, Amalfi, and Gaeta, whose overlordship was claimed by both eastern and western emperors. It also includes Rome, the city of the Pope and the coronation-site of the western emperor, and Venice. Byzantium and Venice were united in the political aim of protecting the Adriatic coast and maritime traffic against Slavs or Croats¹ and Arabs. For Venice this meant free access to the eastern and southern Mediterranean and for Byzantium undisturbed communications between the capital and the Italian provinces. Relations between Constantinople and her provinces in Southern Italy depended mainly on who actually controlled the Adriatic. It is worth noting that in the 970s the Arab traveller and geographer Ibn Hauqal called the Adriatic *Jūn al-Baradiqīn*, the Bay of the Venetians.² The political and military interdependence of both Adriatic coasts cannot be overemphasized. Basil I, for instance, began his campaign to recover Apulia only after the Arabs had raided the Dalmatian coast from their bases in Bari and Taranto. During the last decade of the ninth and first half of the tenth century, the functions of *strategos* of Cephalaria and *strategos* of Longobardia were often combined.³ Therefore it seems reasonable

¹ J.V.A. Fine, "Croats and Slavs: Theories about the Historical Circumstances of the Croats' Appearance in the Balkans", *BF* 26 (2000), 205–18.

² Ibn Hauqal, *Configuration de la Terre (Kitāb surat al-Art)*. Introduction et traduction avec index par J.H. Kramers et G. Wiet, I (Paris, 1964), 8, 61, 189, 196.

³ V. von Falkenhausen, *La dominazione bizantina nell'Italia meridionale dal IX all'XI secolo* (Bari, 1978), 24f.; J. Nesbitt and N. Oikonomides, *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art. I. Italy, North of the Balkans, North of the Black Sea* (Washington, DC, 1991), 18f.; J. Shepard, "Aspects of Byzantine Attitudes



to me to deal in this paper with the duchy of Venice also, which gravitated towards the eastern empire during this period, despite being politically independent.

Throughout the childhood and adolescence of Basil II many significant events occurred in Italy which had direct impact on Byzantine politics: In 962, the German king Otto I was crowned emperor in Rome, when Basil was about four years old. In 964 and 965, when Basil was six and seven, his stepfather, the emperor Nikephoros II Phokas, organized two campaigns against Arab Sicily both ending in major disasters for the Byzantine forces. When Basil was ten, Otto I, who had been refused a Porphrogenita as a bride for his son, invaded Byzantine Italy, without meeting substantial resistance. When he was fourteen, the dynastic marriage between Otto II, son and co-emperor of Otto I, and a niece of John I Tzimiskes, Theophano Skleraina, was finally celebrated in Rome. As a young prince Basil might have met the bride at the Constantinopolitan court. In 976, when Basil became emperor in his own right, at the age of eighteen, Byzantine Calabria was devastated by continuous Arab raids. Except for the Sicilian campaign, none of these events is reported in the Byzantine sources.

For Basil's autonomous reign of almost fifty years Byzantine historians are similarly quite reticent about Italian affairs. For the period between 976 and 1025, John Skylitzes, though informative on Byzantine Calabria for the first half of the tenth century,⁴ refers to Italy only four times. He mentions the Byzantine marriage of John, son of the Venetian doge Peter Orseolo II (1004).⁵ He records the rebellion of Meles of Bari in 1009/1010.⁶ He refers to the campaign against

and Politics towards the West in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries", *BF* 13 (1988), 70–72.

⁴ Skylitzes, 261–7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 343: τότε καὶ τῷ ἄρχοντι Βενετίας γυναῖκα νόμιμον ἔδωκεν ὁ βασιλεὺς τὴν θυγατέρα τοῦ Ἀργυροῦ, ἀδελφὴν δὲ Ῥωμανοῦ τοῦ μετὰ ταῦτα βασιλεύσαντος, τὸ ἔθνος οὕτως ὑποποιοῦμενος.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 348: ταῦτα (the earthquake in Constantinople of March 9th, 1011) δὲ προεμήνυε τὴν μετὰ ταῦτα γενομένην ἐν Ἰταλίᾳ στάσιν. δυνάστης γάρ τις τῶν ἐποίκων τῆς Βάρεως, τοῦνομα Μέλης, παραθήξας τὸν ἐν Λογγιβαρδία λαὸν ὅπλα κατὰ Ῥωμαίων αἵρει. καὶ ὁ βασιλεὺς Βασίλειον ἐκπέμπει τὸν Ἀργυρὸν στρατηγὸν ὄντα τῆς Σάμου καὶ τὸν λεγόμενον Κοντολέοντα τῆς Κεφαλωνίας στρατηγοῦντα ἐπὶ τῷ καταστήσει Ῥωμαίοις τὰ πράγματα. οἷς ἀντιπαραταξάμενος ὁ Μέλης τρέπει λαμπρῶς, πολλῶν πεπτωκότων, οὐκ ὀλίγων δὲ ζωγρηθέντων, τῶν δὲ λοιπῶν τὴν διὰ φυγῆς ἀσχήμονα προκρινάντων ζωὴν.

Arab Sicily, which Basil started shortly before his death in 1025.⁷ He also notes, out of the chronological context of Basil's reign, the remarkable military achievements of the catepan Basil Boioannes (1017–1028), who re-established Byzantine authority in Southern Italy.⁸ Later historians, Zonaras⁹ and Glykas,¹⁰ basing themselves on Skylitzes' chronicle, show even less interest. Thus, our knowledge of Byzantium and Italy in this period, except for the late but well informed Arab historian Ibn al-Athir, is based essentially on Italian sources: the Venetian chronicles of John the Deacon¹¹ and Andrea Dandolo (mid 14th century).¹² The other sources are the *Liber Pontificalis*;¹³ the three versions of the *Bari Annals*;¹⁴ the Greco-Arab *Cronaca Siculo-Saracena*;¹⁵ the chronicles of Montecassino by Leo Marsicanus¹⁶ and Amatus;¹⁷ the early Norman *Gesta Roberti Wiscardi* by William of Apulia;¹⁸ some late tenth and eleventh century hagiographical texts from Calabria (the *Lives* of St Vitalis, St Sabas the Younger, St Christopher and St Makarios, St Luke of Demenna, St Neilos, St

⁷ Ibid., 368: Βουλόμενος δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐκστρατεῦσαι κατὰ τῆς Σικελίας Ὀρέστην προέπεμψε μετὰ δυνάμεως ἀδράς, ἕνα ὄντα τῶν πιστοτάτων εὐνοούχων, αὐτὸς δὲ ἐκαλύθη φθάσαντος τοῦ χρεών.

⁸ Ibid., 426: τὸν ἐπὶ Βασιλείου τοῦ βασιλέως ἐν Ἰταλίᾳ πεμφθέντα Βοϊωάννην, ὃς πᾶσαν Ἰταλίαν μέχρι Ῥώμης τότε τῷ βασιλεῖ παρεστήσατο.

⁹ *Ioannis Zonarae Epitomae historiarum*, ed. M. Pinder, III (Bonn, 1897), 568 (the Sicilian campaign).

¹⁰ *Michaelis Glycae Annales*, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, 1836), 577 (the Italian rebellion of 1011; however, Glykas misunderstands Meles' rôle), 579 (Sicilian campaign).

¹¹ *La Cronaca Veneziana del Diacono Giovanni* in *Cronache Veneziane antichissime*, ed. G. Monticolo, Fonti per la storia d'Italia 9 (Rome, 1890), 148–71; L.A. Berto, *Il vocabolario politico e sociale della "Istoria Veneticorum" di Giovanni Diacono* (Padova, 2001).

¹² *Andreae Danduli ducis Venetiarum Chronica per extensum descripta aa. 46–1280 d. C.*, ed. E. Pastorello, RIS 12, 1² (Bologna, 1942), 178–207.

¹³ L. Duchesne, *Le 'Liber Pontificalis'*, II (Paris, 1892, repr. 1981), 252–68.

¹⁴ *Annales Baresnes*, ed. G.H. Pertz, MGH, Scriptores 5, 53; *Lupi protospatharii Annales*, ed. G.H. Pertz, ibid., 55–7. A much better edition of the two texts has been established in the PhD thesis of W.J. Churchill, *The Annales Baresnes and the Annales Lupi Protospatharii. Critical Edition and Commentary* (University of Toronto 1979); although this remains unpublished, it is used for all the citations in this paper. No manuscript has been preserved of the third redaction, the so-called *Anonymi Baresnes Chronicon*, which is known only through the edition of Muratori in RIS 5, 148f.

¹⁵ P. Schreiner, *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken*, I, CFHB 12, 1 (Vienna, 1975), 338–40.

¹⁶ *Chronica monasterii Casinensis*, ed. H. Hoffmann, MGH Scriptores 34 (Hanover, 1980), 187–275.

¹⁷ Amato di Montecassino, *Storia de' Normanni*, ed. V. De Bartholomaeis, Fonti per la storia d'Italia 76 (Rome, 1935), I.17–34, pp. 21–45.

¹⁸ Guillaume de Pouille, *La geste de Robert Guiscard*, ed. M. Mathieu, Istituto sic. di studi biz. e neoellenici. Testi 8 (Palermo, 1961), I.1–130, pp. 98–106, 261–6.

Nikodemos, St Phantinos the Younger and St Gregory of Burtscheid),¹⁹ and less than a hundred public and private documents in Latin and Greek from Byzantine Southern Italy. In addition, thanks to the progress of medieval archaeological research in Southern Italy, we can now add a growing body of archaeological, epigraphical, sigillographical, and numismatic evidence.²⁰ Finally, during the last decades, a substantial number of Greek manuscripts written during this period either in Southern Italy or by scribes trained in Southern Italy have been identified, which help us to understand the cultural identity of Byzantine Italy.²¹

In the tenth century, the Byzantine provinces in Southern Italy were organized in two themes: *Longobardia* and *Kalabria*. Sicily had been lost to the Arabs in the ninth century, and there is no evidence that the theme of *Loukanía*, mentioned for the first time in 1042, had been created much earlier than that date.²² The Byzantine provinces of Southern Italy were not culturally homogeneous. *Kalabria* was Greek in language and liturgy and belonged to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the patriarch of Constantinople, whereas *Longobardia*, which comprised Apulia and part of modern Basilicata, while closer geographically to Byzantium, was predominantly Latin and Lombard in culture and Roman Catholic in religion. The Byzantine government had generally respected the religious and cultural traditions of Apulia, the sole exception being Nikephoros Phokas who—if we are

¹⁹ G. Da Costa-Louillet, "Saints de Sicile et d'Italie méridionale aux VIII^e, IX^e et X^e siècles", *Byzantion* 29–30 (1959–1960), 125–67; S. Borsari, *Il monachesimo bizantino nella Sicilia e nell'Italia meridionale prenormanne*, (Naples, 1963), 46–63; E. Follieri, *La Vita di san Fantino il Giovane. Introduzione, testo greco, traduzione, commento e indici*, Subsidia hagiographica 77 (Brussels, 1993); V. von Falkenhausen, "Gregor von Burtscheid und das griechische Mönchtum in Kalabrien", *Römische Quartalschrift* 93 (1998), 215–50.

²⁰ J.-M. Martin – G. Noyé, *La Capitanata nella storia del Mezzogiorno medievale*, Società di storia patria per la Puglia. Studi e ricerche 9 (Bari, 1991); D. Michaelides and D. Wilkinson, *Excavations at Otranto. I: The Excavation* (Galatina, 1992); F. D'Andria and D. Whitehouse, *Excavations at Otranto, II: The Finds* (Galatina, 1992); E. Arslan, "Ancora sulla circolazione della moneta in rame nella Calabria di X–XI secolo," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome—Moyen Âge* 110–1 (1998): 359–378; idem, *Catalogo delle monete bizantine del Museo Provinciale di Catanzaro* (Catanzaro, 2000); F. Martorano, *Santo Niceto nella Calabria medievale. Storia, architettura, tecniche edilizie* (Rome, 2002).

²¹ P. Canart and S. Lucà, *Codici greci dell'Italia meridionale* (Rome, 2000).

²² A. Guillou, *Saint-Nicolas de Donoso (1031–1060/1061)*, *Corpus des actes grecs d'Italie du Sud et de Sicile. Recherches d'histoire et de géographie*, 1, (Città del Vaticano, 1967), n. 3, pp. 32–49; idem, "La Lucanie byzantine. Étude de géographie historique", *Byzantion* 35 (1965): 119–49 (repr. in: A. Guillou, *Studies on Byzantine Italy* [London, 1970], X); von Falkenhausen, *La dominazione*, 65–72.

to believe Liudprand of Cremona—had forbidden *in omni Apulia seu Calabria Latine amplius, sed Grece divina mysteria celebrare*.²³

During his short reign, the emperor Nikephoros II Phokas (963–969) was rather active in the Italian provinces. He twice tried to recover Sicily from the Arabs, and fought with some success against the Lombard prince of Capua and Benevento. By the institution of the Catepanate of Italy he reorganized the military and civil administration, which strengthened the importance of Apulia in relation to Calabria, and he tried to extend the influence of the Greek Church in Apulia and Lucania by abolishing the Latin cult and creating the Greek metropolitan see of Otranto with five suffragans in the Basilicata. Nikephoros also opposed the Western emperor Otto I in Italy by supporting Adalbert, son of the Italian king Berengar; in most of these initiatives he failed. There are good reasons for assuming that the dioceses of Acerenza, Gravina, Matera, and Tricarico remained Latin. The Byzantine army sent to Sicily under the command of Manuel Phokas, was completely destroyed by the Arabs—Manuel died in battle, and the *patrikios* Niketas, commander of the fleet, was captured and spent the following years as a prisoner of war in Africa.²⁴ In 968, Otto I crossed Apulia and northern Calabria without encountering much opposition. It seems that the aggressive, war-oriented policies of Nikephoros Phokas were as unpopular in Byzantine Italy as they were in Constantinople. There, according to John Geometres, the dead emperor suffered a *damnatio memoriae*.²⁵ The anonymous author of the *Life of St Neilos* considers exaggerated the project of the *magistros* Nikephoros Hexakionites to invade Sicily (965) instead of merely defending Calabria against Arab raids, an act of μεγαλοφύα, which justified, to some extent, the rebellion of the local population, who destroyed the ships and killed the captains.²⁶

²³ *Liudprandi Cremonensis Relatio de legatione Constantinopolitana*, in *Liudprandi Cremonensis opera omnia*, ed. P. Chiesa, Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio Mediaevalis 156 (Turnholti, 1998), ch. 62, p. 215.

²⁴ Von Falkenhausen, *La dominazione*, 28, 84, 137f.

²⁵ F. Scheidweiler, "Studien zu Johannes Geometres", *BZ* 45 (1952), 311: 'Τίνας ἂν εἶποι λόγους ὁ ἐν ἁγίοις βασιλεὺς Κυροῦς Νικηφόρος ἀποτεμνομένων τῶν εἰκόνων αὐτοῦ;' M. Whittow, *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium, 600–1025* (London, 1996), 349f.

²⁶ Βίος καὶ πολιτεία τοῦ ὁσίου πατρὸς ἡμῶν Νείλου τοῦ Νέου, ed. G. Giovannelli (Grottaferrata, 1972), 101; V. von Falkenhausen, "La Vita di s. Nilo come fonte storica per la Calabria bizantina", in *Atti del Congresso internazionale su s. Nilo di Rossano (28 settembre–1° ottobre 1986)* (Rossano-Grottaferrata, 1989) 292; Shepard, "Aspects of Byzantine Attitudes", 75.

In contrast to his predecessor, John I Tzimiskes (969–976) decided on a less contentious policy in Italy, in order to concentrate his forces on the wars in Asia Minor and in the Balkans: he made peace with the Western emperor by the marriage of his niece to Otto II, and released Otto's ally, Pandulf, the belligerent prince of Capua and Benevento, from Byzantine captivity.

During the long reign of Basil II, Byzantine influence and dominion in Southern Italy, the westernmost province of the empire, underwent various violent modifications, partly provoked by the political situation in Constantinople and the emperor's inability to impose his rule on the liminal areas of the empire. I shall divide Basil's reign, and consequently this paper, into four periods. The first includes the years of the civil war against the pretenders Bardas Phokas and Bardas Skleros (976–989); the second covers the early years of Basil's war against the Bulgarians and his expedition to Syria until the Byzantine recovery of Dyrrachium in 1005; the third period closes with the end of the Bulgarian war in 1018; and the fourth concludes with the death of Basil II in 1025.

During the period from 976 to 989, any Byzantine intervention in Southern Italy, however necessary, was apparently impossible, since no military forces were available to be sent to the West. Thus Arab raids and incursions became almost annual events not only in Calabria, but also in Apulia. Gravina fell in 976, Oria in 977 and Gerace was captured in 986 as was Cosenza in 987. Raids against the suburbs of Bari in 988 led to the capture of many inhabitants.²⁷ The situation was so desperate, that it is quite understandable that the Southern Italian subjects of the Byzantine empire felt little loyalty towards their inefficient and distant lord. Although the documents of Bari and the other Apulian cities continued to be dated by the governmental years of the Eastern Roman emperor, local uprisings took place in Apulia, according to the so-called Lupus Protospatharius, one of the three versions of the *Annals of Bari*, and to some hagiographical sources.²⁸ In some cases, the situation seems to have come close to civil war. Unsurprisingly, the Lombard princes shifted to the

²⁷ *Lupi Protospatharii Annales*, 55f.; Schreiner, *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken*, 339.

²⁸ *Lupi Protospatharii Annales*, 55f.; *Historia et laudes ss. Sabae et Macarii iuniorum e Sicilia auctore Oreste Patriarcha Hierosolymitano*, ed. I. Cozza-Luzzi (Rome, 1893), 37f.

side of the Western emperor again as did some inhabitants of the Byzantine themes, members of the local aristocracy and clergy. Even members of the Greek clergy chose to serve Otto II.²⁹ In contrast to his imperial colleagues in Constantinople, Otto II prepared for a military campaign against the Arabs of Sicily to stop their annual invasions. It may not be coincidental that the name of Otto, which does not belong to the onomastic heritage of the Lombards, begins to be used in Byzantine Apulia in this period,³⁰ and that a castle called *Sassonia* or *Sassonion* (close to the modern Castrovillari in northern Calabria) is first mentioned in the Byzantine sources.³¹ Only the dukes of Amalfi, who had specific commercial interests in Constantinople and special political agreements with several Arab emirates, continued in their allegiance to the Eastern empire, receiving and displaying their Byzantine titles.³²

Otto II's anti-Arab campaign ended in the notorious disaster of the battle of Colonne in southern Calabria (982), near modern Villa San Giovanni.³³ Most of the German and Lombard knights were killed, and the emperor himself was among the lucky few to escape. Nevertheless, since the Sicilian emir and part of his army also fell, some contemporary local sources, including Lupus, the Anonymous of Bari, and the Paris version of the *Cronaca Siculo-Saracena*, do not report a Christian defeat, but emphasize only the Arab losses.³⁴ In any case, after the battle of Colonne, the Arab incursions decreased

²⁹ The Calabrian bishop Leo, for instance, followed the Western emperor to Liège (*Rupertii Chronicon S. Laurentii Leodiensis*, MGH Scriptores 8, 266), and John Philagathos from Rossano became an important figure at the court of Otto and Theophano: W. Huschner, "Giovanni XVI, antipapa", in *Dizionario dei Papi*, II (Rome, 2000), 112–16.

³⁰ At Lucera (999–1015): Otto *iudex* [*Codex diplomaticus Cavensis*, III (Naples-Milan, 1876), no. 525, pp. 93f., IV (Naples-Milan, 1877), nos. 626, 679, 691, pp. 154–6, 243–5, 262–4]. At Canosa (between 1010 and 1016): V. von Falkenhausen, "Un σιγίλλιον bizantino nel codice *Crypt.* A. a. XI e A. a. XIII", *Bollettino della Badia greca di Grottaferrata*, n. s. 47 (1993), 72–7.

³¹ F. Burgarella and A. Guillou, *Castrovillari nei documenti greci del Medioevo* (Castrovillari, 2000), 43–59.

³² U. Schwarz, *Amalfi im frühen Mittelalter* (Tübingen, 1978), 38–45.

³³ D. Alvermann, "La battaglia di Ottone II contro i Saraceni nel 982", *Archivio storico per la Calabria e la Lucania* 62 (1995), 115–30.

³⁴ *Lupi Protospatharii Annales*, 55: *Hoc anno fecit prelium Otto rex cum Saracenis in Calabria in civitate Columne, et mortui sunt ibi quadraginta milia paganorum cum rege eorum nomine Bullicassinus*. The text of *Anonymi Barenensis Chronicon*, 148, is quite similar. Schreiner, *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken*, I, 340: καὶ ἐγένετο κατασφαγὴ τῶν Σαρακηνῶν πολλῇ ἐν τῇ τῶν Καλαβρῶν χώρῃ.

for a number of years, and after the death of Otto II in 983, the Saxon dynasty kept out of Southern Italy for several decades. Moreover, since the princes of Capua and Benevento were killed in action against the Arabs, Lombard opposition towards Byzantium became less determined. By sheer luck therefore, the main opponents of Byzantine dominion in Italy had been eliminated—at least for a short period—without any action by Constantinople. The imperial catepan, Kalokyros Delphinas, immediately took advantage of the situation by extending Byzantine territory to northern Apulia. Ascoli Satriano was recovered in December 982.³⁵ From 983 the documents of Lucera were dated by the regnal years of the Eastern Roman emperors.³⁶ A few years later the same process may be observed at Lesina.³⁷

After the end of the civil war, Basil II was engaged for the next twenty years against the Bulgarians. Once again, it was impossible to send substantial military forces to Southern Italy to limit or to stop the Arab incursions, which continued to undermine the Byzantine dominion. According to the anonymous hagiographer who wrote the *Life of St Neilos* in the 1020s, it was common knowledge that of all the cities in Calabria Rossano alone had never been conquered by the Arabs:

διὰ τὸ πάσης τῆς χώρας ἐρημωθείσης, καὶ πασῶν τῶν πόλεων ἔργον γεγεννημένων τῆς τῶν Σαρακινῶν πολυεπηρείας, μόνον διαφυγεῖν μέχρι καὶ νῦν τῆς αὐτῶν ἀπολείας τὸν νόμον.³⁸

But the Catepanate of Italy also suffered from the raids of the Saracens, who apparently possessed some bases in the mountains of the Basilicata, as for instance at Pietrapertosa.³⁹ In March 992, Basil

³⁵ *Lupi Protospatharii Annales*, 55.

³⁶ V. von Falkenhausen, "Zur byzantinischen Verwaltung Luceras am Ende des 10. Jahrhunderts", *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, 53 (1973), 397–406.

³⁷ T. Leccisotti, *Le colonie cassinesi in Capitanata*, I: *Lesina (sec. VIII–XI)* (Montecassino, 1937), 63–5.

³⁸ Βίος καὶ πολιτεία, 48.

³⁹ A. Guillou and W. Holtzmann, "Zwei Katepansurkunden aus Tricarico", *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 41 (1961): 1–20 (reprint in: A. Guillou, *Studies on Byzantine Italy* [London, 1970], VII). Arab incursions and settlements in Apulia and Basilicata: F. Trinchera, *Syllabus Graecarum membranarum* (Naples, 1865) n. 10, p. 9, n. 15, pp. 15–17 (Taranto and Oriolo); *Lupi Protospatharii Annales*, 56 (Matera and Montescaglioso).

II and Constantine VIII therefore made an agreement with Venice, the terms of which are defined in the well-known *chrysobullum sigillum*, unfortunately transmitted only in a mediocre Latin translation. The emperor granted toll privileges to Venetian ships in Constantinople and Abydos, while the doge, Peter II Orseolo (991–1009), promised naval assistance whenever the emperors wanted to send an army to Southern Italy:

*cum prompta voluntate indefessis servitiis quem fortisan ambulat nostrum imperium in Longobardiam dirigere, illius varicationes operare cum suis navigiis, et nullum occasionem aut mormorium in isto facere servitio.*⁴⁰

During the following years it becomes obvious that the collaboration between Venice and Byzantium worked well. The successful Venetian expedition in Dalmatia, down to Zara, Curzola, and Lagosta in 1000–1001 was certainly coordinated with the emperor.⁴¹ Basil must have been pleased to have a faithful ally operating north of the Bulgarian realm. As for Southern Italy, the Byzantine-Venetian connection proved to be fundamental after the Bulgarian conquest of Dyrrachium in the 990s, which prevented communication between Constantinople and her Italian provinces. In 1002, it was the doge Peter II Orseolo who relieved Bari, the capital of the Catepanate of Italy, from a long Arab siege.⁴² Two years later, in 1004, the alliance was strengthened by the marriage of Peter II Orseolo's son to Maria, the daughter of an Argyropoulos.⁴³

In approximately the same period, Basil II was in discussion with Otto III about the possibility of a dynastic marriage between the Western emperor and a Byzantine princess. When Otto's ambassador, the archbishop of Piacenza, John Philagathos, returned to Rome in 997, he became involved in a violent uprising against Otto's cousin, Pope Gregory V. Having expelled the Saxon pope, the Romans elected John as the new bishop of Rome, encouraged perhaps by

⁴⁰ M. Pozza and G. Ravegnani, *I trattati con Bisanzio. 992–1198*, Pacta Veneta 4, (Venice, 1993), 21–25; A. Pertusi, "Venezia e Bisanzio; nel secolo XI", in *La Venezia del Mille* (Florence, 1965), 157, [repr. in: A. Pertusi, *Saggi veneto-bizantini*, Civiltà Veneziana. Saggi 37 (Florence, 1990), 73–84]; *Andreae Danduli ducis Venetiarum Chronica*, IX, 1, p. 193.

⁴¹ G. Ortalli, "Il ducato e la 'civitas Rivoalti' tra carolingi, bizantini e sassoni", in *Storia di Venezia dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima*, I (Rome, 1992), 776–8.

⁴² Von Falkenhausen, *La dominazione*, 53f.

⁴³ Skylitzes, 343; *La Cronaca Veneziana del diacono Giovanni*, 167–169; Ortalli, "Il ducato", 779.

the Byzantine ambassador, Leo metropolitan of Synada who in his letters openly boasts of his part in the conspiracy.⁴⁴ John was a Greek from Rossano, who had been Otto II's Italian chancellor and a close collaborator of the empress Theophano. It is quite revealing that at the end of the tenth century a Greek pope was apparently more acceptable to the Romans than a Saxon. Even though in that period the official relations between Old and New Rome were not intense, they were never completely interrupted. Pope Boniface VII (974, 984–985) had spent some years of his exile in Constantinople, from whence he returned just after Otto II's death.⁴⁵ A substantial number of Greek clerics and monks were then living in and around Rome and in Latium; for instance Sergius, bishop of Damascus, Sabas the Younger, Neilos of Rossano, and Gregory of Cassano, who enjoyed a certain spiritual authority among the Roman population and at the Western emperor's court. Some of Otto III's Latin ecclesiastical friends, particularly Adalbert of Prague and Leo, abbot of SS Bonifatius and Alexius on the Aventine, cultivated extensive contacts with representatives of the Byzantine and Oriental churches.⁴⁶

When, in 998, the Western emperor crossed the Alps to re-establish his authority in Rome the rebels, including John, were cruelly punished. On that occasion the bishop Leo of Vercelli, one of Otto's court intellectuals, composed his *Versus de Gregorio et Ottone Augusto*, in which he uses rather strong, anti-Byzantine expressions to celebrate the Western emperor's and his pope's Roman triumph:

*Vetusta Antiochia te colit per omnia,
Antiqua Alexandria tibi currit anxia,
Omnes orbis ecclesiae sunt in tua serie.
Babylonia ferrea et aurata Graecia
Ottonem magnum metuunt, collis flexis serviunt.*⁴⁷

⁴⁴ *The Correspondence of Leo Metropolitan of Synada and Syncellus*, ed. and trans. M.P. Vinson, CFHB 23 (Washington, DC, 1985), 10–22; Huschner, “Giovanni XVI, antipapa”, 115f.

⁴⁵ P. Delogu, “Bonifacio VII, antipapa”, in *Dizionario dei Papi*, II (Rome, 2000), 93–5.

⁴⁶ F. Burgarella, “Chiese d'Oriente e d'Occidente alla vigilia dell'anno Mille”, in G. Arnaldi – G. Cavallo (eds.), *Europa medievale e mondo bizantino. Contatti effettivi e possibilità di studi comparati*, Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo. Nuovi studi storici, 40 (Rome, 1997), 198–212; von Falkenhausen, “Gregor von Burscheid”, 230–41.

⁴⁷ MGH, Poet. Lat. Medii Aevi 5, 1–2, ed. K. Strecker (Zürich, 1970), 479; H. Dormeier, “Un vescovo in Italia alle soglie del Mille: Leone di Vercelli ‘episcopus imperii, servus sancti Eusebii’”, *Bollettino storico Vercellese* 2 (1999), 46–50.

But in spite of these grandiloquent words, neither did Otto III—unlike his predecessors—interfere in the Catepanate of Italy, nor did he try to impose his imperial rule on the Lombard princes. Thus the catepan could reinforce his government in northern Apulia, where Byzantine officials operated apparently unopposed.⁴⁸ Moreover, the marriage negotiations between Eastern and Western Rome continued successfully. Obviously, both parties were interested in a dynastic alliance; but when, in 1002, Archbishop Arnulf of Milan, Otto's ambassador, arrived in Bari together with the Byzantine bride, the Western emperor had already died.⁴⁹

For the year 1005, the *Annals of Bari* refer to the Byzantine recovery of Dyrrachium, one of the very few non-Italian events mentioned in this text.⁵⁰ Apparently this was felt by the Apulian aristocracy to be an important event, for it re-opened traffic and commerce with Byzantium. According to John Skylitzes, the Chryselioi family, *proteuontes* of the town, and relations by marriage of the Bulgarian tsar, Samuel, delivered Dyrrachium to the Byzantine *strategos*. In exchange, some of their leading members had asked and received the titles of *patrikios* with the respective *ρόγαι*.⁵¹ Similarly Sergius of Bari, who together with his brother Theophylact had delivered Bari to the catepan in 982, was awarded the title of *protospatharios*.⁵² Byzantium dealt identically with the powerful local aristocracies at the periphery of the empire was the same on both shores of the Adriatic.

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According to Stephenson, a period of peace between Byzantium and the Bulgarians began in 1005.⁵³ In Italy, the *rebellio* or *στάσις* (these

⁴⁸ von Falkenhausen, "Zur byzantinischen Verwaltung Luceras", 395–406; von Falkenhausen, *La dominazione*, 188f.; J.M. Martin, *Foggia nel Medioevo* (Galatina, 1998), 22.

⁴⁹ *Landulfi Historia Mediolanensis*, edd. L.C. Bethmann and W. Wattenbach, MGH Scriptores 8 (Hanover, 1848), 55f.; Arnulf of Milan, ed. C. Zey, MGH Scriptores rer. Germ. in usum scholarum 64 (Hanover, 1994), 135f.; G. Wolf, "Zoe oder Theodora—die Braut Kaiser Ottos III. (1001/1002)?", in G. Wolf (ed.), *Kaiserin Theophanu. Prinzessin aus der Fremde—des Westreichs große Kaiserin* (Köln-Weimar-Wien, 1991), 212–22.

⁵⁰ *Hoc anno rediit Durachium in manus imperatoris per Theodorum: Lupi Protospatharii Annales*, 56.

⁵¹ Skylitzes, 342f.

⁵² *Lupi Protospatharii Annales*, 55.

⁵³ P. Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier. A Political Study of the Northern Balkans, 900–1204* (Cambridge, 2000), 66–71.

words are used for the first time in the historical texts)⁵⁴ of Meles or Ismael started in May 1009. This rebellion, in the course of which the catepan John Kourkouas died, must have been considered a serious affair in Byzantium, for it is the only one mentioned by Skylitzes.⁵⁵ Meles' political aims are unknown, but as he was later awarded the title of *dux Apuliae* by the Western emperor, his models may have been the dukes of Amalfi or Venice, who governed cities with maritime interests like Bari, and not the neighbouring Lombard princes of Benevento, Capua or Salerno.

For the first time in all these years we can recognize a prompt and energetic Byzantine reaction: in 1010 the new catepan, Basil Mesardonites, recovered Bari after a two months siege and crushed the rebellion within the same year. Meles fled first to Benevento, then to Salerno and finally to Capua, and although he was not conveyed to the catepan, his wife and son were sent as hostages to Constantinople.⁵⁶ To prevent further uprisings, Mesardonites built the *πρατώριον*, the fortified residence of the Byzantine governor, in Bari close to the port, at the site where the famous basilica of St. Nicholas was built at the end of the eleventh century.⁵⁷ He also tried to pacify Apulia by inviting refugees to return to the Byzantine provinces.⁵⁸ The Southern Italian sources do not refer to the last stage and the fierce end of Basil II's Bulgarian war, but the *Annals of Bari* do mention the death of tsar Samuel in 1014 and the murder of his son in 1015.⁵⁹ These events had a direct influence on Byzantine politics in Italy, for the end of the war in Bulgaria allowed the emperor to project his political designs towards the West.

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In 1017 Meles returned to northern Apulia accompanied by a strong party of belligerent Norman mercenaries who thrice defeated the Byzantine army. The situation changed only with the appointment of the new catepan Basil Boioannes, active in Southern Italy from

⁵⁴ *Annales Bareses*, 53; *Lupi Protospatharii Annales*, 57; Skylitzes, 348.

⁵⁵ Skylitzes, 348; Cheynet, *Pouvoir*, 35.

⁵⁶ *Chronica monasterii Casinensis*, II, 37, p. 237f.; von Falkenhausen, *La dominazione*, 192.

⁵⁷ A. Guillou, "Un document sur le gouvernement de la province. L'inscription historique en vers de Bari (1011)", in idem, *Studies on Byzantine Italy* (London, 1970), VIII, 1-13.

⁵⁸ von Falkenhausen, "Un σιγγέλιον", 73-7.

⁵⁹ *Lupi Protospatharii Annales*, 57; *Anonymi Barensis Chronicon*, 148.

1017 to 1028, the longest catepanate attested.⁶⁰ This efficient general dominated Byzantine Italy during the last period of Basil II's reign. It has been argued that Boioannes was a person of Bulgarian origin, called Bojan or Bajan, who entered Byzantine service after Samuel's defeat.⁶¹ In fact, in the Italian chronicles he generally appears as *Bugianus*,⁶² *Bogianus*⁶³ or *Boiano*⁶⁴ and in the cod. St Petersburg 71, written in Salerno in 1019/1020 by the monk and priest Michael, he is referred to as ἡγεμονεύοντος τῶν Ταλιανῶν πρωτοσπαθαρίου Βα(σιλείου) τοῦ Βοηάνου.⁶⁵ In the other Greek texts, however, his name is regularly given as Βοιωάννης,⁶⁶ which may have been the official Byzantinized form.⁶⁷ Within a few months Boioannes succeeded in suppressing the rebellion of Meles of Bari and his Norman allies. Meles fled to the court of the western emperor Henry II at Bamberg, where he died in 1020. In 1021, Meles' brother in law and chief ally, Datto, who had withdrawn to a castle by the river Garigliano, was kidnapped and transferred to Bari, where he was drowned. No local rebellions are mentioned in the next decades. Basil Boioannes' name is particularly associated with the creation of new castles and settlements, especially in northern Apulia, the so called Capitanata. The towns of Troia, Dragonara, Civitate, Castel Fiorentino and Montecorvino were founded by him, as a defensive belt against Lombard, Frankish, and Norman invasions from the north.⁶⁸ It may be significant that the contemporary French monk and historian, Adémar of Chabannes, reports that

⁶⁰ Falkenhausen, *La dominazione*, 90f.

⁶¹ M. Mathieu, "Noms grecs déformés ou méconnues", *La Nouvelle Clío* 4 (1952), 299–301; I. Bozilov, *Balgariite vav Vizantijskata Imerija* (Sofia, 1995), 227f., 262–4.

⁶² *Lupi Protospatharii Annales*, 57; *Anonymi Barensis Chronicon*, 149.

⁶³ Guillaume de Pouille, I, lines 84–6.

⁶⁴ *Chronica monasterii Casinensis*, 240f., 261, 274f.

⁶⁵ G. Cereteli and S. Sobolevski, *Exempla codicum Graecorum litteris minusculis scriptorum annorumque notis instructorum*, II: *Codices Petropolitani*, (Moscow, 1913), 7, pl. Xa, read John instead of Basil, but the published photographs (see also K. and S. Lake, *Dated Greek Minuscule Manuscripts to the Year 1200*, VI [Boston/ Mass., 1936], no. 238) read Βα(σιλείου). I am indebted to Santo Lucà for confirming the correct reading.

⁶⁶ von Falkenhausen, *La dominazione*, 90f.

⁶⁷ In the 1030s, Theodoulos Boioannes, who might have been a member of the same family, had founded, the monastery of St. Philip τοῦ Βουγιάννη in the diocese of Vibo Valentia. The Greek documents concerning this monastery, still unedited, offer the same variety of readings: Boiōannes, Bougiannes, Bouiōannes (Archivo Ducal Medinaceli, Toledo, fonds Messina, nos. 1418, 1285, 1378). Two small but good photographs of the documents have been published in *Messina. Il ritorno della memoria* (Palermo, 1994), 149.

⁶⁸ *Chronica monasterii Casinensis*, II, 51, p. 261; von Falkenhausen, *La dominazione*, 57–9.

*Tunc per triennium interclusa est via Jherosolime; nam propter iram Nortmannorum quicumque inuenirentur peregrini, a Grecis ligati Constantinopolim ducebantur.*⁶⁹

Basil Boioannes was clearly anxious to discourage further Norman penetration in Southern Italy.

Boioannes also extended Byzantine domination into the Lombard principalities: Pandulf IV of Capua presented him with the golden key of his city,

*tam se quam civitatem Capuanam, immo universum principatum eius per hec imperio tradens.*⁷⁰

It seems even that the prince of Salerno in some way accepted the Byzantine overlordship. Thus within a few years Boioannes had successfully re-established Byzantine authority in Southern Italy. There was however, a brief set-back in 1022, when the new German emperor Henry II moved to Southern Italy. Unlike his predecessors, he did not enter far into the Catepanate, but was stopped at Troia, the new Byzantine foundation in the Capitanata. In Capua, Henry enthroned a new prince, more to his taste, but as soon as the Western emperor had left Campania, Pandulf IV returned to his principality, and renewed his submission to Byzantium.⁷¹ In 1023, according to Lupus Protospatharius, there were Arab raids in southern Apulia and a brief siege of Bari, but Boioannes reacted quickly, constructing the fortresses of Mottola and Melfi to protect the southern tract of the *via Appia*.⁷² The contemporary rebellion of the Byzantine generals Nikephoros Xiphias and Nikephoros Phokas against Basil II in the east⁷³ may not have been just an accidental coincidence, but perhaps was connected with a temporary reverse of the emperor's good luck.

In 1024, Basil Boioannes crossed the Adriatic and invaded Croatia: he carried off the *Patricissa*, the wife of king Kresimir III, to Bari, whence he transferred her together with her son to Constantinople.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ *Ademari Cabannensis Chronicon*, ed. P. Bourgain, *Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio medievalis* 129 (Turnhout, 1999) III, 55, p. 173f.

⁷⁰ *Chronica monasterii Cainesis*, II, 38, p. 241.

⁷¹ S. Weinfurter, *Heinrich II., Herrscher am Ende der Zeiten* (Regensburg, 1999), 245–9.

⁷² *Lupi Protospatharii Annales*, 57: *Hoc anno (1023) venit Rayca cum Jaffari caiti in civitate Bari in mense junii et obsedit eam uno die; et amoti exinde comprehenderunt Palagianum oppidum; et fabricatum est castellum Motula*. For the construction of Melfi, see Guillaume de Pouille, I. 246–9, p. 112.

⁷³ Cheynet, *Pouvoir*, 36f.

⁷⁴ *Lupi Protospatharii Annales*, 57; *Anonymi Barensis Chronicon*, 149: *Barchavit Bugiano in Corbatia cum Barenses, et compraehen. ipsam Patricissa uxor Cosmizi, et adduxit illam in Bari;*

Both shores of the Adriatic came once again under Byzantine control. Having thus re-organized Byzantine dominion in Apulia, Campania and in the Adriatic, the catepan moved to Calabria to prepare a campaign against Sicily. He began with the reconstruction of Reggio.⁷⁵ Perhaps the mulberry plantations, which produced the raw material for the flourishing Calabrian silk industry about which we first hear in the following decades, were established at this time.⁷⁶ At the end of his reign Basil II had planned the conquest of Arab Sicily, because control of the island was fundamental for the security of the Byzantine provinces in Italy. Boioannes sailed to Messina,⁷⁷ and a huge army,

id est Russorum, Guandalorum, Turcorum, Bulgarorum, Vlachorum, Macedonum aliorumque

was sent to Reggio, but, to quote the *Annals of Bari*,

*peccatis prepedientibus, mortuus in secundo anno Basilius imperator, qui omne frustra reversi sunt.*⁷⁸

*

Before concluding, it may be useful to attempt an assessment of how Basil II's reign was experienced by the local populations of Byzantine Italy. Firstly it is interesting to observe that the population of the two themes reacted quite differently to the growing insecurity caused by incessant Arab incursions. Many Greeks from Calabria emigrated

misitque eam cum filio suo in Constantinopoli. On the relations between Byzantium and Croatia in that period see also J.V.A. Fine, *The Early Medieval Balkans. A Critical Survey from the Sixth to the Late Twelfth Century*, (Ann Arbor, 1983), 275–7.

⁷⁵ *Annales Barenses*, 53: ... *et Regium restauratum est a Bujano.* The fortifications of the castle of S. Niceto may have been built or rebuilt during that period: Martorano, *Santo Niceto*, 124–6, 231f.

⁷⁶ A. Guillou, *Le brébon de la Métropole byzantine de Région (vers 1050)*, *Corpus des actes grecs d'Italie et de Sicile. Recherches d'Histoire et de géographie*, 4 (Vatican City, 1974); idem, "La soie du katépanat d'Italie", *TM* 6 (1976), 69–84, repr. in idem, *Culture et société en Italie Byzantine (VI^e–XI^e s.)*, (London, 1978), XII.

⁷⁷ *Anonymi Barensis Chronicon*, p. 149: ... *et Bugiano cum Barenses barcavit Messinum.*

⁷⁸ *Annales Barenses*, 53; 'Ibn 'al 'Atir, in: M. Amari, *Biblioteca arabo-sicula*, I. versione italiana (Torino-Rome, 1880), 440: 'Anno 416 (4 marzo 1025–21 febbraio 1026). Quest'anno i Rûm andarono in Sicilia con grandi forze e s'insignorirono [dei paesi] tenuti dai Musulmani nella [pen]isola di Calabria, che è vicina all'isola di Sicilia. Avean essi incominciato a costruire gli alloggiamenti per aspettar quivi che arivasse [il rimanente] delle loro navi e la gente [condotta] dal figliuol della sorella del re'. This quotation, which mentions the son of the emperor's sister, must refer to the above mentioned Rus troops.

to Campania, Latium, Rome and even further north, and also to Greece.⁷⁹ This demographic movement is known from both hagiographic and documentary sources. Greek farmers and artisans from Calabria and Sicily settled in the principality of Salerno.⁸⁰ Important monasteries moved entirely to the hinterland of Amalfi, Capua, Montecassino, and Gaeta, carrying their church treasures and their manuscripts to their new monastic homes.⁸¹ Neilos, who left his native Rossano for the Lombard principality of Capua, was offered the metropolitan see of that town,⁸² whilst his compatriot, the above-mentioned John Philagathos became abbot of Nonantola, archbishop of Piacenza, the German emperor's Italian chancellor, and finally pope (or rather antipope).⁸³ Gregory of Cassano was appointed abbot of the imperial abbey of Burscheid, close to Aachen.⁸⁴ The Calabrian monk Elias copied a Greek manuscript, Paris. gr. 375, in Cologne in 1021.⁸⁵ For several decades, these Greek refugees from Calabria and Sicily had an important impact on the cultural and spiritual life of central Italy and of some areas further north, but we should not forget that they were refugees, without political power and connections. Their flight certainly caused an impoverishment of the Byzantine provinces, which were deprived of their most active and cultivated human resources, who became living examples of the failure of imperial politics in Southern Italy. But it seems that during the first decades of the eleventh century the Calabrian emigration trend slowed down appreciably. The Byzantine politics of Basil II's last years had apparently created environmental conditions of greater security and economic progress.

The population of Apulia, however, did not emigrate. Not only was this province somewhat less affected by Arab incursions, but it

⁷⁹ E. Follieri, "Niceforo il 'Nudo' e una nota del codice niliano Crypt. B. b. I", *Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata*, n. s. 39 (1985), 3–13; ead., *La Vita di S. Fantino il Giovane*, 438–462.

⁸⁰ St. Palmieri, "Mobilità etnica e mobilità sociale nel Mezzogiorno longobardo", *Archivio storico per le Province Napoletane*, s. III, 20 (1981), 78–82.

⁸¹ *Codex diplomaticus Cavensis*, II, 233f.; Borsari, *Il monachesimo bizantino*, 54–75; V. von Falkenhausen, "Gregor von Burscheid und das griechische Mönchtum in Kalabrien", *Römische Quartalschrift* 93 (1998), 231–7.

⁸² Βίος καὶ πολιτεία, 112.

⁸³ Huschner, "Giovanni XVI, antipapa," 112–116.

⁸⁴ von Falkenhausen, "Gregor von Burscheid", 238–242.

⁸⁵ R. Devreesse, *Les manuscrits grecs de l'Italie méridionale. Histoire, classement, paléographie* (Vatican City, 1955), 33, n. 9.

was also better protected. From the beginning of Basil II's autonomous rule, in Apulia there is attested the continuous presence of officers of the various *tagmata*: the *Scholai*, the *Hikanatoi*, and the *Exkoubitoi*.⁸⁶ Compared with the defense of Calabria, the protection of the Adriatic coast had a higher priority in Byzantine politics. However, the presence of numerous high-ranking officers, mainly of local extraction, produced violence and disorder. The annalists of Bari record scenes of general anarchy:

979: *Hoc anno occidit Porfirius protospatharius Andream episcopum Oretanum in mense augusti.*

982: *Hoc anno tradita est civitas Bari in manus Calochiri patricii qui et Dalfina, a duobus fratribus Sergio et Theophilacto, mense junii undecima die.*

987: *Hoc anno occisus est Sergius protospatharius a Barensibus mense februarii, quintodecimo die. Et in ipso anno mortuus est Andralistus a Nicolao criti mense augusto, quintodecimo die.*

989: *Hoc anno <mense februarii> descendit Joannes patricius qui et Ammiropolus, et occidit Leonem cannatum (hicanatum) et Nicolaum critis et Porfirium.*

990: *Hoc anno occisus est Bubali et Petrus exubitus mense martii.*

997: *Hoc anno occisus est †marco† Theodorus exubitus in civitate Orie a Smaragdo et Petro germanis.*

998: *Hoc anno venit Busitu caitus cum Smaragdo prefato in Barum mense octobris, et prefatus Smaragdus eques intravit Barum per vim a porta occidentali, et exiit iterum. Tunc Busitu, cognita fraude, discessit.*

999: *Hoc anno descendit Trachanioti catepanus qui et Gregorius, et obsedit civitatem Gravinam, et comprehendit Theophilactum.*

1000: *Hoc anno captus est predictus Smaragdus a Trachanioti in mense julii, undecima die.*

1009: *... Et in mense maji incepta est rebellio. Et in mense augusti apprehenderunt Saraceni civitatem Cosentiam, rupto federe, nomine cayti Sati.*

1023: *Hoc anno venit Rayca cum Jaffari caiti in civitate Bari in mense junii et obsedit eam uno die.*⁸⁷

Since we cannot always identify the protagonists, it is difficult to understand the political background of these laconic reports of local unrest in Bari and in other places in central Apulia. They were written for an audience who knew both the killers and their victims,

⁸⁶ Von Falkenhausen, *La dominazione*, 132–134; eadem, “Bari bizantina: profilo di un capoluogo di provincia secoli IX–XI”, in G. Rossetti, ed., *Spazio, società, potere nell'Italia dei Comuni*, (Naples, 1986), 206; eadem, “Un σιγίλλιον”, 73f.; H.-J. Kühn, *Die byzantinische Armee im 10. und 11. Jahrhundert. Studien zur Organisation der Tagmata*, Byzantinische Geschichtsschreiber, Ergänzungsband 2 (Vienna, 1991), 89, 94–9, 119.

⁸⁷ *Lupi Protospatharii Annales*, 55–7; *Anonymi Barensis Chronicon*, 148; Cheynet, *Pouvoir*, 385f.

and their respective political or personal motivation, while we do not. Various officials, often with Byzantine names, titles and posts (Leo *hicanatus*, the judge Nicholas, Macrotheodorus *excubitus*, Porfirius *protospatharius*, etc.), who presumably were members of the local aristocracy, fought against one another and against the Byzantine catepans, who generally tried to ally with one faction. They sought to enter the capital, Bari, and then to persecute their opponents, but apparently the composition of the factions or clans changed rapidly.⁸⁸ Some of the officials, such as Smaragdus, who is likely to be the *imperiali protospadario et tepoteriti soi scolon* (βασιλικὸς πρωτοσπαθᾶριος καὶ τοποτηρητὴς τῶν σχολῶν) of the same name, mentioned in a document of 992,⁸⁹ collaborated with some Arab leaders.⁹⁰ According to the text of Lupus Protospatharius even the *rebellio* of Meles in 1009 may have been coordinated with the Arab conquest of Cosenza, and in 1023 Rayca, who seems to have been a citizen of Bari and, to judge from his name, of Arab origin, was allied to the Arab qa'id Abu Ja'far. Apparently, everybody tried to carve out for himself a political rôle or a local lordship.

We know a little more about the uprising of Meles, the only local leader who seems to have cultivated wider political connections, that is with the Lombard princes, with Rome, and with the Western emperor. Nevertheless his ethnic origins and political aims remain unclear. According to Skylitzes he was

δυνάστης γάρ τις τῶν ἐποίκων τῆς Βάρεως⁹¹

Leo Marsicanus, the author of the *Chronicle of Montecassino*, presents him as

⁸⁸ V. von Falkenhausen, "A Provincial Aristocracy: the Byzantine Provinces in southern Italy (9th–11th Century)", in M. Angold, ed., *The Byzantine Aristocracy, IX to XIII Centuries*, BAR International Series 221 (Oxford, 1984), 224f.; Cheynet, *Pouvoir*, 385f.

⁸⁹ *Codice Diplomatico Barese*, XX (= *Le pergamene di Conversano*, I, ed. G. Coniglio), (Bari, 1975) no. 25, pp. 54–6.

⁹⁰ In this context a revealing case is told in a document of 1019: during the Arab siege of Bari (1002) the imperial *protospatharius* and *topoteretes* of Polignano, a small town on the Adriatic coast, south of Bari, withdraw to his house in Conversano in the hinterland, when a local inhabitant arrived *cum seditione et arma et comprehensit illum et extraxit eum ab ipsa curte sua volendo egectare illum de ipsa civitate*: *Codice Diplomatico Barese*, XX, n. 35, p. 78f.

⁹¹ Skylitzes, 348.

*Barensum civium, immo totius Apulie primus ac clarior erat, strenuissimus plane ac prudentissimus vir,*⁹²

whereas William of Apulia describes him as

*more virum Graeco vestitum . . .
Exulis ignotam vestem capitique ligato
Insolitos mitrae mirantur adesse rotatus.*

....

*Se Langobardum natu civemque fuisse
Ingenuum Bari, patriis respondit at esse
Finibus extorrem Graeca feritate coactum.*⁹³

His family may, however, have originally belonged to the thriving Armenian community of Bari, for the first person of that name mentioned in an Apulian document is *Mele clericus filius Simagoni presbiteri et armeni* (990),⁹⁴ and Mleh or Melias is a common Armenian name, which became very popular in Bari.⁹⁵ These Armenians had been slowly absorbed and assimilated into the local population, for from the tenth century onwards they lived according to the Lombard law. In this period the Armenian impact on Byzantine society was strong, and it has been convincingly argued that even the Bulgarian tsar Samuel was of Armenian birth.⁹⁶ In the same way that Samuel and his family emphasized their Bulgarian nationality,⁹⁷ Meles and his family may have stressed their Lombard origin. In any case, whatever his origins, Meles considered himself to be a representative of the citizens of Bari and Apulia, who, according to the *Chronicle of Montecassino*, could not stand

*superbiam insolentiamque Grecorum, qui non molto ante, a tempore scilicet primi Ottonis, Apuliam sibi Calabramque sociatis in auxilium suum Danis, Russis et Gualanis vendicaverant.*⁹⁸

⁹² *Chronica monasterii Casinensis*, II, 37, p. 237.

⁹³ Guillaume de Pouille, I.14–20, p. 100.

⁹⁴ *Codice diplomatico barese*, IV, ed. F. Nitti di Vito (Bari, 1900), no. 4, pp. 8–10.

⁹⁵ J.-M. Martin, *La Pouille du VI^e au XII^e siècle*, Collection de l'École Française de Rome 179 (Rome, 1993), 520. Other Armenian names like Kourtikios and Kourkouas were frequent in the Greek speaking community of Taranto: Trinchera, *Syllabus*, 7f., 42–5, 49, 52.

⁹⁶ Étienne Asolik de Tarôn, *Histoire universelle*, trad. de l'Arménien et annotée par F. Macler, part II, livre III, Publications de l'École des langues orientales vivantes, 18 (Paris, 1917), chap. 22, p. 124f.; W. Seibt, "Untersuchungen zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte der 'bulgarischen' Kometopulen", *Handes Amsorya* 89 (1975), 65–98.

⁹⁷ Seibt, "Untersuchungen", 67.

⁹⁸ *Chronica monasterii Casinensis*, II, 37, p. 237.

Maybe he wanted for himself the post of catepan, which normally was not awarded to Byzantine officials of Italian birth.⁹⁹ As noted earlier, Meles died *dux Apuliae* in Bamberg, at the court of the Western emperor in 1020. His son Argyros who, as a hostage at the court of Constantinople, had had a thorough Greek education

*sapientia et disciplina in greco et latino usque ad unguem politus*¹⁰⁰

could count on the same Lombard and Norman loyalties as his father, when he returned to Bari in 1029. They elected him *princeps et dux Italiae* (*Italia* is used here in the Byzantine sense of Apulia) in 1042 and fought with him against the Byzantines. After less than a year, however, Argyros switched sides, becoming a high-ranking Byzantine official. Active in Constantinople and in Paphlagonia he finished his career in Italy as μάγιστρος βέστης καὶ δούξ Ἰταλίας, Καλαβρίας, Σικελίας καὶ Παφλαγονίας (1051–1058). Apparently he got what had been refused to his father. During his Byzantine career, which coincided with the schism between Rome and Constantinople, Argyros always remained a fervent Roman Catholic.¹⁰¹ Argyros was active long after Basil II, but his personal history illuminates the complex and complicated identity of the members of the Apulian aristocracy during the Byzantine era.

The major difference between the Byzantine provinces of Southern Italy was religious in nature. From the eleventh century this led to a growing estrangement and antagonism between Greeks and Latins. As was said before, during the reign of Basil II Byzantium generally respected the Roman Catholic observance of her Apulian subjects. The catepans bestowed lavish donations on Latin churches and monasteries in the Catepanate and even to the Benedictine abbey of Montecassino situated in the Lombard principality of Capua.¹⁰² In the Apulian dioceses they favoured a certain trend of autonomy

⁹⁹ Von Falkenhausen, *La dominazione*, 116.

¹⁰⁰ H. Tritz, "Hagiographische Quellen zur Geschichte Papst Leos IX.," *Studi Gregoriani* 4 (1952), 361. A reproduction of his very elegant and fluent signature has been published in Trinchera, *Syllabus*, plate II, and in G. Breccia, "Scritture greche di età bizantina e normanna nelle pergamene del monastero di S. Elia di Carbone", *Archivio storico per la Calabria e la Lucania* 64 (1997), plate 1a.

¹⁰¹ Von Falkenhausen, *La dominazione*, 59–61, 97f., 204–9.

¹⁰² Von Falkenhausen, *La dominazione*, 182–200.

by creating autocephalous archbishoprics. The clergy of Apulia, although dependent on Rome, was thus independent of the Lombard metropolitan of Benevento. Since the bishops belonged to the élites of their towns and were even sometimes involved in the local struggle for power (as for instance the above mentioned Andrew of Oria),¹⁰³ it was fundamental for the Byzantine government that loyal prelates were elected to the episcopal sees. Although the bishops or archbishops were normally of local origin,¹⁰⁴ some of them with Greek names such as Chrysostomus of Trani and Bari (attested between 987 and 999)¹⁰⁵ or Dionysius of Taranto (attested between 1011 and 1028),¹⁰⁶ may have been Greek by birth and education, although they wrote their signatures and probably celebrated mass in Latin. Ecclesiastical tradition was apparently stronger than the ethnic origins of their bishops. It is reminiscent of the Greek and Syrian popes at Rome in the seventh and eighth centuries, who also used Latin as their professional language. When a bishop had proven to be a reliable Byzantine subject, he was often awarded a second or third dioceses, redistributed after his death.¹⁰⁷ This process was facilitated by the general papal indifference towards Southern Italian affairs during the tenth and early eleventh century. It was a final success of Basil Boioannes' policies that he convinced Pope John XIX to accept the diocese of the newly founded city of Troia under direct Roman jurisdiction.¹⁰⁸

It is almost impossible to arrive even at an approximate assessment of the economic situation of Southern Italy during the period of

¹⁰³ *Lupi Protospatharii Annales*, 55.

¹⁰⁴ In 983 the archbishop of Trani was a prelate with the strange name of Rodostamus who had helped the catepan Kalokyros Delphinas to enter the town after its defection in the time of Otto II: G. Beltrani, *Documenti longobardi e greci per la storia dell'Italia meridionale nel medioevo* (Rome, 1877), 9–11. Except for Trani this name is unknown in Southern Italy: von Falkenhausen, *La dominazione*, 184f.

¹⁰⁵ von Falkenhausen, *La dominazione*, 184, 187.

¹⁰⁶ V. von Falkenhausen, "Taranto in epoca bizantina", *Studi medievali*, 3rd series 9 (1968), 153.

¹⁰⁷ Von Falkenhausen, *La dominazione*, 168f.

¹⁰⁸ W. Holtzmann, "Der Katepan Boioannes und die kirchliche Organisation der Capitanata", *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, phil.-hist. Kl.* 1960, 19–39; J.-M. Martin, "Troia et son territoire au XI^e siècle", *Vetera Christianorum* 27 (1990), 175–201.

Basil II. The numismatic evidence is inconclusive. Hoards containing Basil's gold coins are rare,¹⁰⁹ while the so-called anonymous *folles* (type A₂), although quite common in Apulia and Calabria, cannot be dated precisely.¹¹⁰ In addition, written sources, both documents and hagiography, indicate that the common gold currency in Byzantine Calabria was the Sicilian *tari*.¹¹¹ As for commerce, the ports of Bari and especially of Amalfi were quite active. A paragraph in Basil II's privilege for Venice (992) states that the Venetian ships were not allowed to carry goods to Constantinople belonging to Amalfitan or Jewish merchants or *Longobardos de civitate Bari*.¹¹² Luxury goods from Byzantium, such as Constantinopolitan glass lamps, incense burners, or icons could then be found in Southern Italian church treasures.¹¹³ But this is isolated information. However, in Apulia, and especially in the Capitanata during the last decades of Basil II's reign there apparently has been a distinct growth of economic activity. New churches, monasteries, and villages were founded.¹¹⁴ The construction of the *praitorion* in Bari has been mentioned above. In southern Apulia, the church of S. Pietro at Otranto and the first layer of frescoes are generally dated around the year 1000,¹¹⁵ and some of the paintings of Carpignano carry the date 1020:¹¹⁶ these may be indications of

¹⁰⁹ L. Travaini, *La monetazione nell'Italia normanna*, Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo. Nuovi studi storici 28 (Rome, 1995), 11, 368, 373f.

¹¹⁰ A. Travaglini, "Le monete", in D'Andria—Whitehouse, *Excavations*, II, 256–260; A. Coscarella, *Insediamenti bizantini in Calabria. Il caso di Rossano* (Cosenza, 1996), 86; Arslan, "Ancora sulla circolazione," 362–6; Arslan, *Catalogo*, 74.

¹¹¹ Trinchera, *Syllabus*, no. 13, p. 13; Guillou, *Le brébion*, passim; *Vita Gregorii abbatis prior*, MGH Scriptores 15, p. 1189; von Falkenhausen, "Gregor von Burtscheid", 226f.

¹¹² Pozza and Ravegnani, *I trattati con Bisanzio*, 23.

¹¹³ *Codex diplomaticus Cavensis*, II, n. 382, p. 233f. (S. Giovanni a Mare, Vietri, 986). The monastery had belonged to Greek monks, who had left Calabria because of the Arab incursions. See also the inventory of the church treasure of S. Nicola di Gallucanta at Vietri of 1058: P. Cherubini, *Le pergamene di S. Nicola di Gallucanta, secc. IX–XII* (Altavilla Silentina, 1990), 193–200.

¹¹⁴ A. Jacob, "La consécration de Santa Maria della Croce à Casaranello et l'ancien diocèse de Gallipoli", *RStN*, n. s. 25 (1988), 147–163; Trinchera, *Syllabus*, no. 15, pp. 15–17; G. Robinson, *History and Cartulary of the Greek Monastery of St. Elias and St. Anastasius of Carbone*, *Orientalia Christiana*, 15, 2 (Rome, 1929), I–51, pp. 133–7; Guillou-Holtzmann, "Zwei Katepansurkunden", 27f.

¹¹⁵ L. Safran, *San Pietro at Otranto. Byzantine Art in South Italy* (Rome, 1992), 70–72.

¹¹⁶ A. Jacob, "Inscriptions byzantines datées de la province de Lecce (Carpignano, Cavallino, San Cesareo)", *Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. Rendiconti della Classe di Scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*, s. VIII, vol. 37 (1982), 41–51; M. Falla Castelfranchi, *Pittura monumentale bizantina in Puglia* (Milano, 1991), 58–70.

an economic upturn. New towns and castles founded by Basil Boiannes in the 1020s tend to confirm this view, as well as the mulberry plantations in Calabria, which testify to the production of raw materials for luxury goods, which however, were certainly manufactured elsewhere. In any case, if at the end of Basil II's reign one can notice a certain growth of prosperity, it is only after his death that the Southern Italian economy begins to boom.

As far as Italy is concerned, the near half century of Basil II's autonomous reign provides a text-book example of his general success. After several decades of desperate struggle, he eventually re-imposed Byzantine dominion and 'law and order' in Southern Italy. But apparently something went wrong, for, less than fifty years after Basil's death, the Byzantines were driven out of Italy, and the Normans accomplished the Christian conquest of Sicily. Why were the Byzantines so rapidly swept away from Southern Italy after their impressive performances during the last decade of Basil II's reign? What undermined Basil's achievements?

The most obvious reason is the Norman invasion. After thirty years in Southern Italy in the service of the various local powers the Normans came to understand the intrinsic weaknesses of the political system, and started to conquer the country for themselves.

But there were other reasons. From the second quarter of the eleventh century the papacy became more conscious of its universal mission and responsibilities and tended to interfere more actively in Southern Italy. The religious division between Roman Catholics and Greek Orthodox therefore appears to have been more deeply felt among the upper class and the clergy of Apulia. Apparently they found it more and more difficult to identify themselves with the Byzantine Empire. Quite revealingly the *Annals of Bari* describe the archbishop of Bari Byzantius (1028–1035) as

*cuncte urbis custos ac defensor, atque terribilis et sine metu contra omnes Graecos.*¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ *Annales Barenses*, 54. Archbishop Byzantius' attitude must have been quite popular in Bari, for after his death the citizens elected as his successor a layman, the *protospatharius* Romuald, who had been involved in Meles' uprising; his election was however not accepted by the Byzantine authorities: *Annales Barenses*, 54; *Anonymi Barensis Chronicon*, 148f.; von Falkenhausen, *La dominazione*, 168, n. 74.

But the main reason why Byzantium lost its Southern Italian provinces is more practical in nature. As Basil II well understood, Southern Italy could not be safe without the decisive conquest of Sicily, and without a navy the empire could neither conquer the island, nor govern and successfully defend its Southern Italian provinces. In the long run it was very expensive, perhaps too expensive, to maintain a navy. As long as Venice was willing to help, things went well, but after the defeat of the Bulgarian empire and Venetian expansion in Dalmatia, Venice was certainly not interested in a strong Byzantine Empire which controlled both shores of the southern Adriatic. It is perhaps not accidental that, during the second quarter of the eleventh century Venetian notaries cease to mention the names of the Eastern Roman Emperors in the *datatio* of their documents.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ A. Bartoli Langeli, "Documentazione e notariato", in *Storia di Venezia dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima*, I (Rome, 1992), 856.

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TURNING SISINNIOS AGAINST THE SISINNIAANS: EUSTATHIOS ROMAIOΣ ON A DISPUTED MARRIAGE

Ludwig Burgmann

On Easter Day, 12 April 996 (rather than 21 April 995), 85-year-old Sisinnios (II) was elected patriarch of Constantinople; he died on 28 August 998.¹ Sisinnios had been endowed with the high-ranking dignity of *magistros*; John Skylitzes calls him a distinguished man who excelled in the art of medicine.² During his short patriarchate he is said to have finally reconciled those who had not accepted the 'Tomos of the Union'.³ Sisinnios' concern with Marriage Law was notorious. Several pertinent texts of dubious authenticity were ascribed to him by later generations.⁴ In a letter/decreed of the patriarch Michael Keroularios, that was drafted in A.D. 1051/52 by a *chartophylax* Niketas,⁵ it is said that Sisinnios had frequented the law-courts from childhood and was still leafing daily through the law-books when he was grey-haired; a copyist of Skylitzes' *Synopsis* added jurisprudence to medicine as the arts Sisinnios excelled in.⁶

The basis for this fame seems to lie in a single, but undoubtedly genuine decree which introduced new impediments of marriage and came to be known as 'the *Tomos* of Sisinnios' *tout court*. Issued by the Permanent Synod on Saturday, 21 February 997, the decree forbade marriages of two brothers with two (female) cousins, or of two (male) cousins with two sisters, or of an uncle and his nephew with two sisters, or of two brothers with an aunt and her niece.⁷

¹ V. Grumel, "La chronologie des patriarches de Constantinople de 996 à 1111", *Échos d'Orient* 35 (1936), 67–82, at 71–4. On Sisinnios' age see *SynCP*, cols. 919–920, lines 45–52.

² See Skylitzes, chapter 22.

³ V. Grumel-J. Darrouzès, *Les Regestes des actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople*, vol. I, fasc. II et III, (Paris 1989), no. 813.

⁴ Grumel-Darrouzès, *Regestes*, nos. **805, 807, **809a, and *812 with discussion regarding the authenticity of the single acts. Among the 'legislative' acts attributed to Sisinnios there is only one that does not deal with Marriage Law (no. 808).

⁵ Grumel-Darrouzès, *Regestes*, no. 858. The passage in question is to be found near the end of the text.

⁶ See Thurn's second critical annotation on Skylitzes, 340, line 6.

⁷ Grumel-Darrouzès, *Regestes*, no. 804.

Three centuries after the Council in Trullo, this was a notable expansion of the impediments of marriage, that are based on affinity, canon 54 of that council having only forbidden marriages of a father and his son with a mother and her daughter, of two sisters with a father and his son, of two brothers with a mother and her daughter, and of two brothers with two sisters.

The *Tomos* seems to have generally enhanced sensitivity concerning the permissibility of marriages. Several pertinent decisions by ecclesiastical as well as secular authorities of the eleventh century bear witness to that,⁸ although not all of them mention the *Tomos* explicitly. Its influence is less conspicuous in decisions of civil lawsuits where the petitioners sought to dissolve or corroborate a marriage contract for economic or social reasons.⁹ The eleventh century, however, saw yet another way of contesting marriages—criminal proceedings. These are characterized by the appearance of a prosecutor (κατήγορος) who, on the one hand, had no obvious personal interest in the case but, on the other hand, does not seem to have held any public office.¹⁰ Since all known cases ended with a confirmation of the disputed marriage, we do not know whether the parties would otherwise have suffered a punishment beyond the separation; at the same time, nothing is said about a punishment for the unsuccessful prosecutor.¹¹

⁸ Of the former category I mention but the four earliest patriarchal acts by Sergios II (1001–1019) and Eustathios (1019–1025); see Grumel-Darrouzès, *Regestes*, nos. 822, 823, 826a, and 836.

⁹ The extant (anonymous) decisions have been edited by A. Schminck, “Vier eherechtliche Entscheidungen aus dem 11. Jahrhundert”, *Fontes Minores* 3 (Frankfurt am Main, 1979), nos. II–IV. Tacit allusions to the *Tomos* are to be found in no. III, lines 12–13 and 97–98.

¹⁰ Schminck, “Vier eherechtliche Entscheidungen”, 239–40, was the first to describe this kind of matrimonial trials. With good reason he stated that such a ‘prosecutor’ cannot be compared with the ‘*promotor iustitiae* in matrimonial cases’ of the Roman Catholic church. The tentative comparison with the German ‘Staatsanwalt’, however, does not seem to be suitable either. On the whole, private prosecution played a larger role in Byzantium (as it had done in Rome) than in modern Western societies; a very instructive case from the *Peira* has been analyzed by D. Simon, “Die Melete des Eustathios Rhomaios über die Befugnis der Witwe zur Mordanklage”, *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, romanistische Abteilung* 104 (1987) 559–95. See also *ODB*, art. ‘Criminal procedure’.

¹¹ The principle of ταυτοπαθεια was hardly applicable in matrimonial cases. On false accusation in general see S.N. Troianos, ‘Ο “Ποινάλιος” τοῦ Ἐκλογαδίου (Frankfurt am Main, 1980), 104–7.

Three pertinent *hypomnemata* from the first half of the eleventh century have been preserved, all of them composed by Eustathios Romaioς, the famous judge at the Court of the Hippodrome.¹² One of them stands out by its size; signed and sealed by the judges and issued in April 1025,¹³ it deals with a case of two male cousins marrying two female cousins.¹⁴

The prosecutor was a certain Niketas Bothyrites, who is mentioned in the introductory and concluding passages only,¹⁵ and it is made clear right from the beginning that he had no success. The case was as follows.¹⁶ Kale and Anna₁ are half-sisters. Kale has a son Kosmas, Anna₁ a little daughter (θυγάτριον) Eudokia. 'The designation of the relationship between the second persons (i.e. Kosmas and Eudokia)', Eustathios explains, 'is ἀνεψιοί, whereas common usage calls them πρῶτοι ἐξάδελφοι.'¹⁷ Mitze and Anna₂ are also sisters, not related to Kale and Anna₁. Anna₂ has a son Nikolaos, Mitze a daughter Maria. Again, Eustathios says that the relationship between Nikolaos and Maria is called ἀνεψιότης ἡγουν ἐξαδελφότης—a rather unhelpful demonstration of an atticist education in view of the fact that the 'confusion of the designations of relationship' will play an important role in the discussion of the case. Kosmas' parents arrange a betrothal with Maria that is soon ended by the death of Kosmas.¹⁸ Thereafter, Nikolaos, the cousin of Maria, marries Eudokia, the cousin of the late Kosmas, and this marriage is contested by Niketas Bothyrites.

¹² On Eustathios' biography see N. Oikonomides, "The 'Peira' of Eustathios Romaioς: An Abortive Attempt to Innovate in Byzantine Law", *Fontes Minores* 7 (Frankfurt am Main, 1986), 169–92, at 169–79.

¹³ These pieces of information are to be found at the end of the *hypomnema*.

¹⁴ Andreas Schminck was so kind as to make the manuscript of his critical edition of the *hypomnema* available to me. For the time being, references have to be given to I. Leunclavius, *Iuris Graeco-Romani tam canonici quam civilis tomī duo* (Frankfurt am Main, 1596, repr. Farnborough, 1971), I, 414–24, an edition that was reprinted with minor corrections by G.A. Ralles-M. Potles, *Σύνταγμα τῶν θείων καὶ ἱερῶν κανόνων*, V (Athens, 1855; repr. 1966), 341–33. Excerpts from the *hypomnema* are to be found in *Peira* 49. 27–33. For the two other extant Eustathian *hypomnemata* see below, nn. 80 and 82.

¹⁵ Leunclavius I, 414.18–31 and 424.24–32 = Ralles-Potles, V, 341.9–20 and 353.26–31.

¹⁶ Leunclavius I, 414.32–415.5 = Ralles-Potles, V, 341.21–342.15.

¹⁷ This phrase got lost by *homoiarkton* in that branch of the manuscript tradition on which the extant editions are based.

¹⁸ N.B.: neither the fact that Kale and Anna₁ are half-sisters only nor the fact that Kosmas died before the contraction of marriage will play a role in Eustathios' argumentation.

For didactic purposes or, one might suspect, to demonstrate his rhetorical skill, Eustathios dwells a little longer on the problem of drawing the line between permissible and forbidden marriages. He does so by introducing two metaphors, both based on natural phenomena.²² Adopting the first one from Sisinnios,²³ he declares that the flow of blood, which starts from the father and through his two sons reaches their children and grandchildren, becomes gradually weaker and finally runs dry. More aptly, it would seem, he compares kinship to magnetism that becomes weaker and weaker, the more pieces of iron are appended, chain-like, to the lodestone. To Eustathios' credit it has to be said, that for him it is the law again which defines where the bloodflow runs dry and the magnetism finally loses its force.

For the ordinary Byzantine, counting the degrees of relationship seems to have been a difficult thing. Numerous pertinent treatises that occur in a great number of manuscripts bear witness to that. Eustathios, too, deems it advisable to quote a long passage from the classic treatise on the degrees of relationship in Theophilos' Greek paraphrase of Justinian's *Institutes* that had been incorporated into the *Basilika*.²⁴ He does not indicate the end of his almost literal quotation;²⁵ he nevertheless rightly states, that the (civil) legislator prohibited marriages between cousins and between second cousins, but did not extend the prohibition to the offspring of the latter, related to each other in the eighth degree. Consequently, Eustathios says, 'the patriarch' scrutinized only marriages between brothers on the one side and first cousins on the other, and left the further degrees without censure.

However, having passed on to affinity, Eustathios alludes to the scriptural concept of husband and wife becoming 'one flesh' (μία σάρξ)²⁶ and points to its paradoxicality.²⁷ Having described it as a union and interpenetration (συνάφεια καὶ συμπεριχώρησις)²⁸ of the

²² Leunclavius, I, 415.40–416.3 = Ralles-Potles, V, 343.10–21.

²³ Leunclavius, I, 201.29–34 = Ralles-Potles, V, 17.8–12.

²⁴ *Basilika* XXVIII. 5, 1 = *Theoph. Inst.* 3.2 (*partim*).

²⁵ Actually, the transition occurs in Leunclavius, I, 416.30 = Ralles-Potles, V, 344.11.

²⁶ See Gen. 2.24 and the quotations in the New Testament: Mt. 19. 5–6, Mk. 10.8, 1 Cor. 6.16, Eph. 5.31.

²⁷ Leunclavius, I, 416.40ff. = Ralles-Potles, V, 344.19ff.

²⁸ The compound seems to be a *hapax*.

two souls, he says that the (husband's) brother will regard his sister-in-law as sister, but will not transfer this notion to all her collateral relatives. In accordance to the law, he will strictly avoid a marriage to the sister, the aunt, and the cousin of his sister-in-law, since they are related to her in the second, third, and fourth degrees and to him in the fourth, fifth, and sixth respectively. However, he may marry her second cousin, since he is separated from her by eight degrees; for the same reason, two male cousins may marry two female cousins. Again, Eustathios leaves the seventh degree unmentioned.

The following section²⁹ dwells further on this point. It seems to imply that the 'prosecutor' had concluded from the 'one flesh' verse that affinity forms a closer tie than collateral relationship or, more concretely, that the wife is 'one flesh' also in relation to her brother-in-law. Eustathios points to the absurdity of this view; he nevertheless feels compelled to adduce a law which says that collateral relatives 'do not have a first degree (of relationship) but start from the second'.³⁰ Without explicitly saying so, he shows that on the basis of husband and wife being 'one flesh' affinity constitutes the same degrees as collateral relationship. Consequently, with regard to marriage the impediments for in-laws cannot reach further than those for collateral relatives.

Returning to the *Tomos*, Eustathios shows that 'the patriarch' had taken this point into consideration too.³¹ Eustathios says that Sisinnios, in discussing the 'confusion of the designations of relationship' (σύγχυσις τῶν συγγενικῶν ὀνομάτων), had confined himself to the case in question when saying that the same persons are called 'brothers' and 'brothers-in-law' (σύγγαμβροι), and their children 'first cousins' (after their fathers) and 'second cousins' (after their mothers) respectively. Moreover, Sisinnios had referred to such marriages as 'the lesser and last sin'.³²

Having stated the preventive character of Sisinnios' rules by quoting a particularly colourful passage from the *Tomos*,³³ Eustathios deems it necessary to warn his audience against confusing the *argumenta a*

²⁹ Leunclavius, I, 417.17–43 = Ralles-Potles, V, 345.7–30.

³⁰ *Basiliika* XLV. 3, 1.

³¹ Leunclavius, I, 417.43ff. = Ralles-Potles, V, 345.30ff.

³² Actually, Sisinnios had spoken of the 'lesser' wrong or sin only (Leunclavius, I, 201.43–202.10 = Ralles-Potles, V, 17.19–18.8); see also Schminck, "Vier eherechtliche Entscheidungen", 237 n. 38.

³³ Leunclavius, I, 202.5–10 = Ralles-Potles, V, 18.3–8.

maiore ad minus and *a minore ad maius*. However, he hastens to say that he has taken this line of argumentation not from dialectics (διλεκτική) but from jurisprudence (νομική); indeed, he is able to produce a quotation from the law: 'He who is entitled to more, is also entitled to less'.³⁴

Once more focussing on the problem of the 'confusion of the designations of relationship',³⁵ Eustathios then quotes, as Sisinnios had done in his *Tomos*,³⁶ from Basil the Great's letter (160) to Diodoros of Tarsus (= canon 87) who had enquired about a man marrying two sisters in succession.³⁷ In order to prove that Basil's (negative) answer was in accordance with 'the laws', he quotes a short passage from the *Basilika*: 'The fiancée of my father or my brother I cannot take, since (with regard to me) the former has the position of a step-mother, the latter the position of a sister-in-law'.³⁸ The logic is clear and simple: a) the sexual distribution of the persons involved is reciprocal; b) the respective circumstances provide an *argumentum a fortiori*: in the cases regulated by the *Basilika* the first couples had been only engaged.

When introducing Basil the Great, Sisinnios had characterized him by 'a word of the Theologian' (Gregory of Nazianzos).³⁹ This may have induced Eustathios to quote in his turn a longer passage from 'the Theologian'. By content, it is only loosely connected with the case in question, since it deals with adultery. Gregory had attacked the secular laws for punishing only adulteresses, and he had named the reason—the laws were given by men—and adduced another example, the *patria potestas*.⁴⁰ Again, Eustathios insists that the church father could not, and did not intend to, alter secular law, and he adds that with regard to divorce the secular rules (θεσπίσματα) comply with the intentions of 'the Theologian', insofar as they restrict the husband's right to repudiate his wife. On the whole, this passage⁴¹

³⁴ *Basilika* II. 3, 21.

³⁵ Leunclavius, I, 418.37ff. = Ralles-Potles, V, 346.31ff.

³⁶ Leunclavius, I, 199.37–39 = Ralles-Potles, V, 14.27–8.

³⁷ Saint Basile, *Lettres*, ed. Y. Courtonne, II (Paris, 1961), 92.2–6; P.-P. Joannou, *Fonti. Fascicolo IX. Discipline générale antique. II. Les canons des Pères grecs*, (Grottaferrata [Roma], 1963), 168.5–9.

³⁸ *Basilika* XXVIII. 5, 2, 9.

³⁹ Leunclavius, I, 199.37–9 = Ralles-Potles, V, 14.27–8.

⁴⁰ *Oration* 37, 6: Grégoire de Nazianze, *Discours* 32–37, ed. C. Moreschini, SC 318 (Paris 1985), 282–4 (ch. 6, lines 4–12).

⁴¹ Leunclavius, I, 419.22–50 = Ralles-Potles, V, 347.27–348.16.

seems a little far-fetched, and one would like to know whether it was provoked by pertinent arguments of the prosecutor.

In the next section,⁴² Eustathios points to the fact that even a marriage between third cousins, although accepted by the laws, leads to a 'coincidence (συνέμπτωσης) of designations', which, however, remains irrelevant. By way of explanation (γὰρ) he says that the husband whose wife has died childless, will have a share in the inheritance with his brother and all other third cousins of the deceased, whoever they are, since he has 'the same degree of possession', and that this is in accordance with 'the law' which says, 'A relative of the eighth degree, even if he does not enter upon the inheritance, is helped by the (praetorian) law (*Basilika* XLV, 2, 14 pr.).'⁴³ Eustathios asserts that this 'constitution',⁴⁴ which has been observed by emperors and the Roman 'tribe (φύλον) for many centuries and was never 'accused' by an ecumenical or local synod, shows that the same man is called 'husband' (literally 'yoke-fellow [σύζυγος]') and 'cousin (ἐξάδελφος)' of the woman. This is obviously wrong, and one can only guess what made Eustathios commit this blatant error. The pertinent legal norm would have been *Basilika* XXXV, 12, 30, but Eustathios had 'used up' this norm already when proving that marriages between collateral relatives of the eighth degree are explicitly admitted by the law.⁴⁵ From another, anonymous decision on a disputed marriage that can be dated approximately to the third decade of the eleventh century we learn that there were people who determined the circle of relatives who are forbidden to marry each other by the circle of relatives who inherit each other *ab intestato*.⁴⁶ In this context, both *Bas.* XXXV. 12, 30 and *Bas.* XLV. 2, 14, pr. could play a role. If the author of the anonymous decision, too, quotes the latter norm only, this is clearly meant as a *deductio ad absurdum*

⁴² Leunclavius, I, 419.50ff. = Ralles/Potles, V, 348.16ff.

⁴³ *Basilika* XLV. 2, 14 pr. = *Digesta* XXXVIII. 8, 9 pr. Schol. Pc 1 on the paragraph of the *Basilika* follows the Digest fragment more closely. The uninitiated reader might consult A. Berger, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law* (Philadelphia, 1953), s. vv. 'Bonorum possessio' and 'Bonorum possessio intestati (ab intestato)', or W.W. Buckland, *A Manual of Roman Private Law*, 2nd edition (Cambridge, 1938; several reprints), ch. XI.

⁴⁴ Since the citation is not taken from the Code but from the Digest, the technical term would be δίγαστον rather than διάταξις; since the Digest, however, had been confirmed by Justinian, the whole collection as well as its single fragments could be called διατάξεις.

⁴⁵ See above at n. 21.

⁴⁶ Schminck, "Vier eherechtliche Entscheidungen", no. III, lines 47–88.

and shows that the eighth degree of collateral relationship had not yet been questioned. Nothing of this can justify Eustathios' mistake.

However, returning to Sisinnios,⁴⁷ Eustathios asserts that the said law was even confirmed by the 'new *kanonisma*', since the latter was firmly founded on the laws and tightly bound to them; it had not rescinded any of the written laws, but only named, and objected to, an unwritten habit. For Sisinnios would not have been allowed to rebel against imperial constitutions—constitutions in no way directed against creed and worship—, especially since the most important points of the faith have been laid down with, and confirmed by, the consent of the emperors who convoked the synods. Therefore, Eustathios says, 'the patriarch' rather respected 'this law' (*Bas.* XLV, 2, 14 pr.) when he proclaimed 'that law' (the *Tomos*), which forbids the marriage between second cousins only. For it would not have been possible that one and the same person establishes rules in accordance with the laws and tramples down the laws.

Still dealing with Sisinnios,⁴⁸ Eustathios quotes another law: 'The earlier laws are adduced to the later ones; therefore they are valid with regard to similar persons and things. The later (laws) are adduced to the earlier ones, too, if they are not opposed to them'.⁴⁹ In rather polemical words Eustathios then invites the 'audacious despiser of the law' to prove that the law that was received in the 'canon' is opposite to the other rule, 'and nobody will contradict'. If, however, of the two existing valid 'constitutions' the patriarch took one as testimony and proof for his words and built a new statute (*θέσπισμα*), then the construction is of the same nature as its 'sister constitutions' and not alien.

It is thus utterly manifest—Eustathios concludes⁵⁰—that those marriages which fall under the 'certain (*τις*) legal impediment' are to be shaken off in disgust together with the attendant 'confusion of designations'. Those marriages, however, which escape the 'certain impediment', are not invalidated solely by the 'clash (*σύγκρουσις*) of designations'—"for the addresses (*προσηγορίαι*) and appellations (*κλήσεις*) do not produce the things, but it is from the things that the designations (*ὀνόματα*) are formed'.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Leunclavius, I, 420–17ff. = Ralles-Potles, V, 348.30ff.

⁴⁸ Leunclavius, I, 420.32ff. = Ralles-Potles, V, 349.8ff.

⁴⁹ *Basilika* II. 1, 36–38.

⁵⁰ Leunclavius, I, 420.45ff. = Ralles-Potles, V, 349.18ff.

⁵¹ This is in the tradition of Platonic thinking; see e.g. *Kratylos* 309d9–e1 and 430b9–10. I owe this hint to Diether Roderich Reinsch.

This is the cue for Eustathios to deliver the ‘proof’, promised earlier,⁵² that a ‘confusion of designations’ does not arise with children that are born in legally permissible marriages.⁵³ Thus tacitly reducing the problem of the confusion to the offspring of the disputed marriages, he says that if two (male) first cousins marrying two (female) first cousins beget children, these are called second cousins from both sides. If, however, two brothers marry two (female) second cousins, their children are called first cousins after their fathers, whereas their relationship will not be designated after their mothers, since their relationship by this route is that of third cousins, which does not lead to a mingling of blood; *a fortiori* this holds true, where two brothers marry two females whose relationship to each other is even more distant.

Eustathios continues:⁵⁴

Although these things are settled in such a sound and blameless way there are some people who under the pretext of continence and piety wish to fulfil their desires, of whatever nature they are, and, playing with other people’s lives, misuse the law which says: ‘In marriages we look not only for that which is allowed but also for the decent and noble’.⁵⁵

This law, says Eustathios, does not grant the judges the right to speculate about the decent and the indecent. For those who read that saying in such a way usurp the dignity of legislators or even a higher one, by presuming not to stay with those things that are allowed but to cheapen them under the pretext of decency.

How could anybody dare to say that the indecent is associated with the permissible, so that the legal rules are disregarded? Or how could it be that the legislator, knowing that some marriages carry indecency in themselves did not banish them from the legal corpus but gave power over them to other people? Those who venture upon such reasoning are led far astray from the right thoughts. For whoever wants to judge justly must follow the existing laws, if he wants to belong to those who are highly esteemed and observe the laws, and he must not look for their reason which may surpass the perception of the many, before a newer legislator changes and amends something in the exist-

⁵² Leunclavius, I, 418.37–9 = Ralles-Potles, V, 346.31–3.

⁵³ Leunclavius, I, 421.1ff. = Ralles-Potles, V, 349.24ff.

⁵⁴ Leunclavius, I, 421.20ff. = Ralles-Potles, V, 350.6ff.

⁵⁵ *Basiliika* XXVIII. 5, 7 pr.

ing laws. For one must not alter the unalterable laws as long as they are valid.

Only after having shown that the said ‘law’ (νόμος)⁵⁶ does not provide an “absurd” (ἄλλόκοτος) licence for the judges, does Eustathios present the context of the maxim and quote ‘the most wise Modestinos:⁵⁷ ‘We, the legislators of the Romans, do not leave every marriage, which is contracted beyond the dissolution of relationship, uncensored, as if it were admitted simply for the reason that it does not defile related blood, *but we look also for the decent*.⁵⁸ Since Eustathios had quoted this part (the *principium*) of the Digest fragment just a few lines before, it can easily be seen that only the words printed in italics are genuine. The following section he quotes literally. ‘The marriage of the daughter or the granddaughter or the great-granddaughter of a man of high rank to a freedman or an actor or the son of an actor or an actress is invalid.’ This law, Eustathios explains, does not deal with a mingling of blood but procures solemnity for the senatorial clan (γένος). When introducing a law, he says, the legislator is concerned not only with the legal, the just, the useful, the possible and the eventual, but also with the respected which is identical with the decent and the noble; that is why the ‘lawyer’ confirms his opinion (δόξα) by this principle. Duplicating this argument, Eustathios introduces ‘the admirable legislator Paulos’⁵⁹ who had followed the same rule of legislative wisdom in a ‘decree’ (θέσπισμα) dealing with certain impediments of marriage that are based on adoptive or natural relationship.⁶⁰ Eustathios explicitly says that Paulos—to be understood: in contrast to Modestinos—placed the motive at the end of the decree (ὑπέταξε τὴν κατασκευὴν τῷ θεσπισματι). This is an amusing, since unnecessary untruth: Eustathios simply leaves the remaining two paragraphs (θέματα) out.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Leunclavius, I, 421.47. Ralles-Potles, V, 350.27 have misunderstood this passage and tacitly printed Τόμος.

⁵⁷ Modestinus Herennius was one of the Roman jurists whose legal writings were excerpted and compiled in Justinian’s Digest.

⁵⁸ Leunclavius, I, 421.52–422.4 = Ralles-Potles, V, 350.32–351.2.

⁵⁹ Iulius Paulus was another Roman jurist whose works had provided material for Justinian’s Digest.

⁶⁰ *Basilika* XXVIII. 5, 3, pr.–2.

⁶¹ Being a judge at the Hippodrome, Eustathios must have had access to a neat copy of the *Basilika*, which showed the division into chapters (κεφάλαια) clearly.

‘It has, alas, become evident’, Eustathios sums up,⁶² ‘that the legislators introduce such rules as prop and ornament of their own decisions (δόγματα)—rules which the emperors as well as the senate accepted and, having taken them from those (legislators’) books, incorporated into the Fifty Books of the Digest.’ Eustathios then draws the parallel with Sisinnios, who had legitimately used the same rule when, legislating in accordance with the emperor’s intention (κατὰ γνώμην βασιλικήν), he introduced the new decree. Judges, however, are not authorized to follow this example.

In order to prove this, Eustathios for the last time returns to his *leitmotif* of the ‘certain impediment (τις κώλυσις)’.⁶³ This, he says, ‘does not grant infinite authority to the judges but shouts that there is a definition, and this we call “a certain impediment”’. Eustathios argues that, what has been laid down in writing, is defined, whereas what has not yet been enacted, is undefined. ‘Thus whoever wants to circumvent the ‘certain’ (τις) of the law must necessarily replace it by another definition.’ Eustathios reduces the possibilities to the alternative ‘no impediment whatsoever (οὐδεμία κώλυσις)’ or ‘any (πᾶσα) impediment’. In the first case the opponent would contradict himself, insofar as he ‘not even abides by the written impediments but in his turn invents many unimaginable ones’. In the second case he would contradict the law, which does not speak of ‘any’ (πᾶσα) or ‘an unlimited’ (ἄπέραντος), but of a ‘certain’ (τις) impediment. Thus, Eustathios resumes, all considerations that bypass the ‘certain’ (τις) are absurd or, rather, childish and silly phantoms.

Apparently, the prosecutor had convinced some members of the court. At any rate, Eustathios feels induced to paint a rather dark picture of the administration of justice.⁶⁴ Given the great number of judges, their controversies, their different education and ability, how can one assure that the legal rules are observed? Otherwise, the rules being rescinded and the authority entrusted to the judges, everybody would be able to shake down a marriage. In that case, who would be more miserable than those who wish to marry, if they are at the mercy of sympathy or antipathy? However, the laws have to be manifest, so that no Roman can say that he does not know them.⁶⁵ On

⁶² Leunclavius, I, 422.30–42 = Ralles-Potles, V, 351.22–32.

⁶³ Leunclavius, I, 422.42ff. = Ralles-Potles, V, 351.32ff.

⁶⁴ Leunclavius, I, 423.10–35 = Ralles-Potles, V, 352.11–30.

⁶⁵ Cf. e.g. *Basilika* II. 6, 14 and *Epitome legum* 1, 32, both taken from *Codex Justinianus* I, 14, 9.

what grounds, then, is someone accused for having contracted an illegitimate marriage, or where in the laws will he find a pertinent text? Nothing of this, Eustathios says, worries the self-appointed author of rules (δογματιστής), but without a glance at any legal or canonical prescription he wants to threaten the marriages by his own right (αὐτονόμως). Such tyrannical and barbaric behaviour is not to be adopted; instead, one has to follow the laws.

Eustathios has not yet reached the end. As a 'fragrant spice (εὐώδες ἄρωμα)', he adds a little story from legal history (νομικὴ ἀρχαιολογία) to the *hypomnema* before delivering the sentence.⁶⁶ Once upon a time, he says, there was no legal relationship between collateral relatives. In order to increase friendship (τὸ φίλιον) in the body of citizens, the legislators introduced impediments of marriage and intestate succession, thus making known solidarity and instigating natural love. Moreover, they taught the people to widen their kinsfolk by inter-marriage, thus adding in-laws to blood-relations. Similarly, Sisinnios had spoken of the transition from the endogamic habits of (old) Israel to the exogamic system of the 'New Israel'.⁶⁷ Eustathios explains that this was particularly useful for the Romans of old times who were destined by God to be at war from early youth to old age, and that ancient tactics, too, had made use of such relations.⁶⁸

After this digression, Eustathios returns for the last time to the existing legal situation which has to be observed.⁶⁹ In colourful metaphors he compares those laws which forbid some (well-defined) marriages to a knife that excises a mortal infection, whereas those people who do not distinguish prudently and do not keep within the legal boundaries, but confuse the limits and attack the more distant degrees (of relationship), make the laws like carnivorous afflictions such as shingles, erysipelas, and gangrene—'and what could happen or be done worse?'

Since the laws have proven Niketas' accusation to be unfounded, Eustathios concludes, the contested marriage has been confirmed, so

⁶⁶ Leunclavius, I, 423.35–424.8 = Ralles-Potles, V, 352.30–353.12.

⁶⁷ Leunclavius, I, 198.24–44 = Ralles-Potles, V, 13.4–20.

⁶⁸ See e.g. Leo VI, *Tactica* IV.41 (39), ed. R. Vári, I (Budapest, 1917), 66, with the corresponding passage from Onasander, *Strategikos* 24; Nikephoros Phokas, *Præcepta militaria*, ed. E. McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth: Byzantine Warfare in the Tenth Century* (Washington, DC, 1995) I.2, lines 10–12, with McGeer's commentary (p. 183). A very similar reasoning is to be found already in the *Iliad* (B 362–368) and—in a homoerotic variant—in Plato's *Symposium* (178 E–179 B).

⁶⁹ Leunclavius, I, 424.8–25 = Ralles-Potles, V, 353.12–26.

that Nikolaos can live fearlessly with his wife, and the children she bears him will be his legitimate heirs.⁷⁰

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Eustathios is the first for whom the application of the counting of degrees to affinity is attested.⁷¹ Was he also the first to execute this application and, if so, did he realize the implications of this transfer? Facilitating the defence against all foreseeable attempts to extend the impediments of marriage beyond the sixth degree of affinity, the degree system implies that up to the sixth degree all possible computations are affected, not only those which had been named explicitly by Sisinnios.⁷² As long as the impediment is confined to the sixth degree, other configurations are biologically and socially not very probable; however, the possibility that, for example, a man might marry the sister of his grand-niece's husband cannot be excluded.

The question whether Eustathios was the first to count degrees of affinity, has been answered in the negative on the grounds of the *hypomnema* on the marriage of Ioannes and Maria, where Eustathios, indeed, shows a certain reserve against applying the degree system in a pertinent case.⁷³ Since there are indications that this case was tried later than the marriage of Nikolaos and Eudokia,⁷⁴ one might argue that Eustathios realized the dangers of the degree system only belatedly. More fundamentally, it cannot be postulated that Eustathios must have argued consistently throughout his judicial career. Anyway, it is not very likely that counting the degrees in cases of affinity started before the promulgation of the *Tomos* of Sisinnios. Finally, the heading of the indirect transmission of *Peira* 49.27 (the first of the paragraphs that were excerpted from our *hypomnema*), seems to regard this paragraph as the *locus classicus* for this practice: 'From the book of the *Peira*, that it is possible to count degrees in cases of affinity, too (Ἐκ τοῦ βιβλίου τῆς Πείρας, ὅτι δυνατόν καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν

⁷⁰ Leunclavius, I, 424.25–32 = Ralles-Potles V, 353.26–31.

⁷¹ This was observed already by J. Zhishman, *Das Eherecht der orientalischen Kirche* (Vienna, 1864), 299³.

⁷² This was seen by K.G. Pitsakes, "Παίζοντες εἰς ἀλλοτρίους βίους. Δίκαιο καὶ πρακτικὴ τῶν γαμικῶν κωλυμάτων στὸ Βυζάντιο· Ἡ τομὴ", *Η καθημερινή ζωή στο Βυζάντιο* (Athens, 1989), 217–36, at 230.

⁷³ Schminck, "Vier eherechtliche Entscheidungen", 237.

⁷⁴ Schminck, "Vier eherechtliche Entscheidungen", 234–5.

ἀγχιστευσάντων (-ευόντων) βαθμοὺς λέγεσθαι).⁷⁵ Remarkable as it is, this heading does not prove anything.

Leaving this point aside, one might ask whether Eustathios personally had a 'moral' or 'political' opinion in the case of Nikolaos and Eudokia and, if so, what his position was. The question is legitimate, since the *Tomos* of Sisinnios can be seen—and was seen by the Byzantines—as a crucial point in the development of matrimonial law in general and the impediments of marriage in particular.⁷⁶ Hardly any other text of Byzantine law seems to have been copied so often and discussed so vehemently; even modern scholars do not always refrain from displaying partiality. With regard to Eustathios the question is difficult to answer. On the one hand, he reproaches the prosecutor harshly, at times arguing more like a counsel for the defence than a judge; and it is true that he strongly opposes to an unreasonable and excessive interpretation of the 'one flesh' (μία σάρξ) doctrine and Modestinos' maxim of decency⁷⁷—arguments which Sisinnios had used in the opposite direction.⁷⁸ On the other hand, Sisinnios had forbidden marriages between in-laws of the fifth and sixth degree only, whereas in the case in hand it was a matter of the eighth degree of affinity. Thus, it needed neither courage nor liberality to rebuff the prosecutor. On the contrary, Eustathios could explicitly stress his absolute accordance with Sisinnios and use the *Tomos* as a weapon against the prosecution.

At this point, a rapid glance over Eustathios' other known decisions on disputed marriages is in order. The case that is reported in the first sentence of *Peira* 49.1⁷⁹ differs from the case of Nikolaos and Eudokia only by the computation. In the case of Ioannes and Maria, who were related to each other in the seventh degree of affinity, Eustathios—again displaying a rather hostile attitude towards the prosecutor—declared the marriage permissible.⁸⁰ The same degree

⁷⁵ The heading was edited by S. Perentidis, "Trois notes sur la tradition de la *Peira*", *Ἐπετηρὶς τοῦ Κέντρου Ἑρεῦνης τῆς Ἱστορίας τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ Δικαίου τῆς Ἀκαδημίας Ἀθηνῶν* 27–28 (1980–1981 [1985]), 635–671 at 657.

⁷⁶ A. Schminck, "Kritik am *Tomos* des Sisinnios", *Fontes Minores* 2 (Frankfurt am Main, 1977), 215–54; Pitsakes, "Παίζοντες εἰς ἀλλοτρίους βίους".

⁷⁷ See above at notes 27–9 and 54.

⁷⁸ Leunclavius, I, 199.5–6, 200.41–201.3 = Ralles-Potles, V, 13.31–2, 16.8–20.

⁷⁹ Despite the following καὶ this sentence should form a separate paragraph.

⁸⁰ Eustathios' *hypomnema* has been edited, translated and discussed by Schminck, "Vier eherechtliche Entscheidungen", no. I. See also the excerpts in *Peira* 49.36–7.

of affinity, though in a different computation, was said to exist in the case of Euthymios and Maria; the situation was a little delicate, though, since the case had already been decided upon. In June 1023, under the presidency of the Patriarch Eustathios and with the participation of civil judges a synod had convened in the Small Bureau (μικρὸν σέκρετον) and had separated the couple and sent Maria into a monastery.⁸¹ Luckily, Eustathios Romaïos, together with the metropolitan of Athens who had decided favourably on that marriage before, found out that there was no need to discuss the admissibility of the 'second' marriage, since with regard to the first 'marriage' not even the betrothal had been legally valid.⁸²

Peira 49.13 declares the marriage of a man who had married the daughter of the (male) cousin of his deceased wife to be—not 'incestuous' (ἀθέμιτος)⁸³ but—'indecent' (ἀπρεπής). Incidentally, it is the only extant testimony for an Eustathian decision regarding a case of affinity proper.

With regard to the seventh degree of blood-relations the evidence is not uniform and a little suspicious. In a short text, which looks more like a part of a theoretical or didactic treatise than of a *hypomnema* and is ascribed to Eustathios by Demetrios Chomatenos in his *Ponema* 6,⁸⁴ it is said that the seventh degree with regard to blood-relations is neither forbidden nor allowed, but should rather be avoided (εὐλαβεῖσθαι), whereas with regard to in-laws it does not constitute an impediment at all. On the other hand, *Peira* 49.3 lacon-

⁸¹ Grumel-Darrouzès, *Regestes*, no. 826a.

⁸² Grumel, *Regestes*, no. 834 had attributed this text to the patriarch Alexios Stoudites even though he realized that *Peira* 49. 34 is an excerpt from it. A.P. Christophilopoulos, "Παρατηρήσεις εἰς τὴν Πείραν Εὐσταθίου τοῦ Ῥωμαίου", *BNJ* 17 (1939–43), 82–91, at 86–7, repr. in idem, *Δίκαιον καὶ ἱστορία* (Athens, 1973), 145–54, at 149–50, has proven that the attribution to a patriarch is impossible and has voted for Eustathios Romaïos. Oikonomides, "The 'Peira' of Eustathios Romaïos", 179, was the first to notice that § 35 of the *Peira's* chapter 49 is based on the same *hypomnema*: see Leunclavius, I, 262.9–12 = Ralles-Potles, V, 22–3.

⁸³ For this pregnant meaning of ἀθέμιτος see, e.g., *Peira* 49.15 and *Basilika* XXVIII. 5, 34.

⁸⁴ Grumel-Darrouzès, *Regestes*, no. **849 with references to which now Prinzing's CFHB edition of Chomatenos is to be added. Since the case in question is anonymized and names which appear later in the rather didactic than narrative or argumentative part of the text obviously do not denote real persons, the origin in an *hypomnema* may be doubted. This does not necessarily mean that the attribution of the text to Eustathios should be regarded as suspicious, too.

ically states that collateral relatives up to the seventh degree are forbidden to marry each other.⁸⁵

However these minor discrepancies are to be explained, it appears that Eustathios on the whole followed a cautious and moderate course.

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Among the extant decisions on disputed marriages, Eustathios' *hypomnema* on the case of Nikolaos and Eudokia is by far the most circumstantial, although the factual and normative situation could hardly have been less complicated. The *hypomnema* on the case of Ioannes and Maria,⁸⁶ for instance, has only a quarter of the length, even though there Eustathios had to deal with two different accusations by the prosecutor. Refraining from speculation about the reason for the extraordinary verbosity in the case of Nikolaos and Eudokia, we shall try to describe and distinguish its different elements. Firstly, the rhetorical embellishment of the *hypomnema* is well above average. Moreover, Eustathios uses the *Tomos* of Sisinnios not only factually as the most recent pertinent norm, but also rhetorically as a background text and as a provider of key words and motifs which he varies and elaborates upon.⁸⁷ The quotation of several legal norms that are not—or at least not directly—relevant to the case serves to show the legal expertise of the author and illustrates the paradox that for Byzantine jurists the law was just an argument, albeit the most important one, and that they did not develop specifically legal dogmatics.⁸⁸

Last but not least, Eustathios' concern about the question of the validity of legal norms is obvious and considerably adds to the size of the *hypomnema*. When he says, 'One must not alter the unalterable laws as long as they are valid',⁸⁹ this could be interpreted as, 'One must not interpret the laws in another way than I do', but

⁸⁵ On the impediment of the seventh degree of collateral relationship see K.G. Pitsakis, *Τὸ κώλυμα γάμου λόγω συγγενείας ἐβδόμου βαθμοῦ στὸ Βυζαντινὸ δίκαιο* (Athens-Komotini, 1985), in particular ch. 2 on the period in question.

⁸⁶ See above, n. 80.

⁸⁷ See above, in particular at nn. 23, 33, 36, 39, and 67.

⁸⁸ D. Simon, *Rechtsfindung am byzantinischen Reichsgericht* (Frankfurt am Main, 1973), Greek trans. I.M. Konidaris, *Ἡ εὕρεση τοῦ δικαίου στὸ ἀνώτατο βυζαντινὸ δικαστήριο* (Athens, 1982).

⁸⁹ Leunclavius, I, 421.45–6 = Ralles-Potles, V, 350.26–7.

there certainly is a theoretical point to this positivist credo. For Eustathios, the emperor is the ultimate source of law. Whenever he quotes a normative text that is not part of the codification and thus cannot be called a 'law' (νόμος) proper, he hastens to explain in which way it partakes of imperial authority. In the case of the (ecumenical) councils this was quite simple: They had been convoked and presided over by the emperors themselves.⁹⁰ To the church fathers (Basil the Great and Gregory of Nazianzos) Eustathios grants less authority insofar as he implicitly requires that their accordance with the law must be examined.⁹¹ With regard to the *Tomos* Eustathios says that 'the patriarch' issued it 'in accordance with the emperor's intention (κατὰ γνώμην βασιλικήν)'.⁹² This does not indicate that 'the *tomos*' was confirmed by a subsequent formal act of the emperor,⁹³ but equates the Permanent Synod with the (ecumenical) councils insofar as its decisions share imperial authority. Consequently, after having introduced the act of 997 as '*tomos*'⁹⁴ Eustathios regularly calls it *kanonisma* or (holy) canon,⁹⁵ thus equalizing it to the canons of the great councils; twice he even speaks of the 'novel canon' (νεαρός κανών) or 'novel *kanonisma*' (νεαρόν κανόνισμα)⁹⁶—an obvious allusion to the imperial novel constitutions (νεαραὶ διατάξεις).⁹⁷ It is idle to speculate whether Eustathios would have conceded this status to every synodal decision. One should consider, though, that in 1025, when Eustathios wrote his *hypomnema*, the reigning emperor was still the same as in 997, and Basil II, himself a bachelor, had obviously neither said nor done anything against the *Tomos*.

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⁹⁰ Leunclavius, I, 420.24–8 = Ralles-Potles, V, 349.1–4.

⁹¹ See above at nn. 37–41.

⁹² Leunclavius, I, 422.37 = Ralles-Potles V, 351.27–8.

⁹³ See Schminck, "Kritik", 215, though in the context of a rather different argumentation.

⁹⁴ Leunclavius, I, 415.8 = Ralles-Potles, V, 342.18.

⁹⁵ Leunclavius, I, 415.13, 14, 26; 416.37, 417.18, 418.20, 23; 420.39 = Ralles-Potles, V, 342.22, 23, 33; 344.17, 345.7–8, 346.17, 19–20; 349.13. See also Leunclavius I, 416.35–6, 420.32 = Ralles/Potles, V, 344.15–16, 349.7 for the verb κανονίζεν.

⁹⁶ Leunclavius, I, 415.33 and 420.17 = Ralles-Potles, V, 343.5 and 348.31. For the sake of completeness it should be mentioned that Eustathios uses the expressions νέον θέσπισμα and καινόν δόγμα as well: Leunclavius, I, 420.43 and 422.37–8 = Ralles-Potles, V, 349.16–17 and 351.28.

⁹⁷ In his paraphrase of our *hypomnema*, the author of the *Peira* at the beginning of 49.28 (corresponding to Leunclavius, I, 417.43ff. = Ralles-Potles, V, 345.30ff.) even speaks of the 'novel law' (νεαρός νόμος) of Sisinnios. Zachariae's suggestion to read τόμος instead misses the point.

Rather surprisingly, there is another group of 'legislators' Eustathios names: the Roman jurists.⁹⁸ What did or could he know about them?⁹⁹ He will surely have read *Basilika* II, 1, 7, pr. and Theophilos' Greek paraphrasis of *Institutes* I, 2, (3–4 and) 9—texts which count the 'authority' (αὐθεντία/*auctoritas*) and the 'answers' (ἀποκρίσεις/*responsa*) of the 'wise men' (σοφοί/*prudentes*) among the sources of Roman law.¹⁰⁰ Eustathios quotes two of those wise men: Modestinos and Paulos. The names he could learn from the *Basilika*, since the chapters (κεφάλαια) that were taken from the Digest regularly bear the author's name, written in Latin or Greek characters, be it sometimes in an abbreviated or mutilated form, in the wrong place,¹⁰¹ or represented by a simple IDEM. It may be wondered whether Eustathios combined these informations by pure conjecture, thus identifying the names with the 'wise men'. Yet, in the eleventh century the *constitutio* 'Δέδωκεν'¹⁰² may still have been available in Constantinople and accessible for a judge at the Court of the Hippodrome.¹⁰³ In §§ 10 and 20 of that constitution Justinian, too, had spoken of those jurists as the 'legislators of old (ἔμπροσθεν νομοθέται)'. Moreover, the *constitutio* 'Δέδωκεν' was followed by an index of the ancients (ἀρχαῖοι) and their books from which the Digest had been composed.¹⁰⁴ In

⁹⁸ See above, notes 57 and 59.

⁹⁹ On the Byzantines' knowledge of legal history see A. Schminck, "Ein rechtshistorischer 'Traktat' im Cod. Mosq. gr. 475", *Fontes Minores* 9 (Frankfurt am Main, 1993), 81–96, with a survey of other pertinent texts in notes 1–6.

¹⁰⁰ Incidentally, there is an amusing retouch in Eustathios' rendering: Justinian/Theophilos had said that legislating was conceded to the 'wise men' by either the people or the senate or the emperor—Eustathios leaves the people (δῆμος) out.

¹⁰¹ These two kinds of corruption can, by chance, be observed in the fragment by Modestinos which Eustathios quotes (*Basilika* XXVIII. 5, 7 [Scheltema-van der Wal]): F reads MODÉSTU, Pa reads POMP for Pomponios or Pomponiu, a name that would belong to the foregoing paragraph. For another example, concerning the name Modestinos, see L. Burgmann-S. Troianos, "Appendix Eclogae", *Fontes Minores* 3 (Frankfurt am Main, 1979), 24–125 at 54. Again, one can assume that Eustathios had access to a neater copy of the *Basilika*.

¹⁰² By this constitution, a Greek parallel version of the constitution *Tanta*, Justinian had confirmed the Digest.

¹⁰³ Like the constitution *Deo auctore*, by which Justinian had reorganized legal studies, *Tanta* had been incorporated into Justinian's Code (*Cod. Iust.* I. 17, 2). The *Basilika*, in a very unusual way, present only short references to these constitutions (*Bas.* II. 6, 20–21). The (Greek) text of the constitution Δέδωκεν has been preserved solely in the 'Codex Florentinus', the famous Digest manuscript of the sixth century.

¹⁰⁴ At least this was the case in the 'Codex Florentinus'. For the original order of the leaves of that manuscript see most recently W. Kaiser, "Schreiber und Korrektoren des Codex Florentinus", *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte*,

this index Paulos is in twenty-fifth and Modestinos in thirty-first place, the former with 71, the latter with 15 works.

However, the traditional designation of the Roman jurists as ‘legislators’ does not sufficiently explain the rather pointed self-designation in Eustathios’ very elaborate ‘quotation’ from Modestinos.¹⁰⁵ Eustathios cannot have had a historically precise conception of the ‘authority’ exercised by the Roman jurists. He must have been well aware, though, that after Justinian the decisions (δόγματα) of the jurists owed their legal force solely to their incorporation into the Digest, i.e. to imperial authority. Eustathios obviously saw himself as a successor of the old jurists. He must have read with particular interest Theophilos’ Greek paraphrase of the *constitutio Imperatoriam* by which Justinian had confirmed the *Institutes* and whose § 6 says that this didactic work is based mainly on the *hypomnemata* of Gaius. Eustathios could not know how little Gaius’ *hypomnemata* (*commentariū*) had in common with the *hypomnemata* of a Constantinopolitan judge of the eleventh century. Yet, the latter might find their way into juridical manuscripts and thus acquire a quasi-normative quality, as had been the case with two decisions (ψηφοί) of the *magistros* Kosmas and another anonymous decision some generations before.¹⁰⁶ We know that there even existed a numbered collection of Eustathian *hypomnemata*,¹⁰⁷ and an admiring pupil composed a normative textbook from Eustathios’ deeds, the *Peira*.¹⁰⁸ Incidentally, both titles under which this book was known—‘Πείρα (Experience)’ and ‘Διδασκαλία

romanistische Abteilung 118 (2001), 133–219, at 210–17. N.B. that nothing of what has been said above touches on the question, whether the ‘Codex Florentinus’ itself was written in Constantinople and, if so, when it was brought to Italy. With regard to the pertinent debate see most recently W. Kaiser, “Zum Aufbewahrungsort des Codex Florentinus in Süditalien”, in F. Theisen and W.E. Voss (eds.), *Summe—Glosse—Kommentar* (Osnabrück, 2000), 95–124.

¹⁰⁵ See above at n. 58.

¹⁰⁶ Ed. N. Svoronos, *Les nouvelles des empereurs Macédoniens concernant la terre et les stratiotes* (Athens, 1994), 235–47; for their (rather stable) context in the manuscripts see N.G. Svoronos, *Recherches sur la tradition juridique a Byzance. La Synopsis Major des Basiliques et ses appendices* (Paris, 1964); L. Burgmann, M. Th. Fögen, A. Schminck, D. Simon, *Repertorium der Handschriften des byzantinischen Rechts*, I (Frankfurt am Main, 1995), nos. 8, 15, 46, 48, 49, 52, 59, 70, 108, 115, 116, 147, 160, 169, 172, 210, 238, 239, 244, 253, 254, 256, 260, 261, 265, 275, 290, 291, 292, 304, 308, 323–324.

¹⁰⁷ Schol. Pa 3 on *Basilika* XXIII. 3, 78 refers to the 75th, schol. Pa 2 on *Basilika* XXII 4, 9 to the 183rd ὑπόμνημα τοῦ Ῥωμαίου.

¹⁰⁸ For the qualification of the *Peira* see Oikonomides, “The ‘Peira’ of Eustathios Romaïos,” 191, with the remarks by Simon, “Die Melete”, 561–2, n. 8.

(Teaching)¹⁰⁹—may well be borrowings from Theophilos' translation of the *constitutio Imperatoriam* (§ 3).¹¹⁰ Eustathios himself, however, despite all his insinuations to the contrary, knew that there was a fundamental difference between a judicial decision and a law, even if the former had been confirmed by the emperor.¹¹¹ Exactly this difference manifests itself in a legislative trend that started under the Doukai: controversies between judges were decided upon by the emperor, and these decisions were explicitly promulgated as laws.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ See the heading of the *Peira*'s table of contents (*pinax*). The heading that was printed by Zachariae on the page before the beginning of the edition proper is not genuine.

¹¹⁰ The heading of the *Institutes* itself, both in its typically simplified Latin form *INSTITUTA* and in its current hellenizations (see L. Burgmann, M. Th. Fögen, R. Meijering, B. Stolte, *Fontes Minores* 8 [Frankfurt am Main, 1990], 427 *s.v.* *instituta*) may have seemed inappropriate.

¹¹¹ *Peira* 49.26 and 63.4 inform us about such confirmations.

¹¹² L. Burgmann, "Lawyers and legislators: aspects of law-making in the time of Alexios I", in M. Mullett and D. Smythe (eds.), *Alexios I Komnenos*, I (Belfast, 1996), 185–98.

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BYZANTINE HISTORY WRITING AT THE END OF THE FIRST MILLENNIUM

A. Markopoulos

On examining Byzantine historical writings of the tenth century, it becomes evident that the genre was entering a new phase. After the dearth of the second half of the ninth century, a period from which virtually no historical work has come down to us¹—with the exception, perhaps, of George the Monk²—the age of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus and his successors presents us with works of far-reaching importance and interest. Leaving aside, for the present, the *Excerpta*—a detailed study of which still remains a desideratum³—the extensive account of Theophanes Continuatus, Genesisios, the two versions of Symeon the Logothete (hereafter Log. A and Log. B), the chronicle of Pseudo-Symeon, and Leo the Deacon form the historiographical landmarks of the period, while it is certain that, as far as we can ascertain from the prologue of Skylitzes,⁴ other historical works were written in the tenth century but have not survived.

Of these texts, only the Logothete and Pseudo-Symeon display the formal and time-honoured features of historiographical compositional technique, covering as they do the period from the Creation to 948⁵ and 962 respectively. In the other works a number of very interesting innovations can be observed:

¹ The study by W.T. Treadgold ("The Chronological Accuracy of the *Chronicle* of Symeon the Logothete for the Years 813–845," *DOP* 33 [1979], 157–97) was not continued and did not put forward particularly convincing evidence.

² In my article "Συμβολή στὴ χρονολόγηση τοῦ Γεωργίου Μοναχοῦ", *Σύμμεικτα* 6 (1985), 223–31, I attempted to demonstrate that the terminus post quem for the composition of George the Monk was 871. Recently D. Afinogenov ("The Date of *Georgios Monachos* Reconsidered," *BZ* 92 [1999], 437–47) dated the work to the years 843–845, though with little evidence to support the claim.

³ The questions posed by P. Lemerle (*Le premier humanisme byzantin* [Paris, 1971], 280–88) have yet to be answered. From the more recent biography I mention here the article by P. Schreiner, "Die Historikerhandschrift Vaticanus Graecus 977: ein Handexemplar zur Vorbereitung des Konstantinischen Exzerptenwerkes?" *JÖB* 37 (1987), 1–29.

⁴ See pp. 192–4 below.

⁵ A number of the manuscripts of the Logothete 'cycle' relate events beyond this date (see below, pp. 187–8).

1) It is clear that continuous narrative and, above all, strict chronological ordering of events are discreetly but steadily put aside, as interest is increasingly focused on the analysis of specific *individuals*, who are not simply described by way of digression as in earlier texts but rather constitute the core of the narrative, the object, as it were, of the historiographer's attention, and whose career and fate are usually set within a predetermined framework. It is the emperor Basil I who stands out in the ideological and literary events of the period. As far as we can tell from the funeral oration for Basil written by Leo VI in 888,⁶ the concern of the Macedonian dynasty to strengthen its position by extolling the virtues of the new helmsman of the state was already apparent while Basil was still alive⁷ as well as in the period immediately following his death. Theophanes Continuatus and Genesios, both products of the circle of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, perhaps even the "plume laborieuse" of the emperor himself (particularly Book V of Continuatus: the *Life of Basil*),⁸ can be cited in this respect. These accounts, innovative in their conception, aimed to elevate⁹ Basil at the expense of Michael III, the last descendant of the Amorion dynasty.¹⁰ In other words, they comprised a typical

⁶ See, most recently, Theodora Antonopoulou, *The Homilies of the Emperor Leo VI* (Leiden-New York-Cologne, 1997), 61.

⁷ Photios played an important role in this process. See p. 187, n. 24 for relevant bibliography.

⁸ Here I quote Lemerle, *Premier humanisme*, 282. The issue of whether, according to the traditional view, Constantine VII wrote the entire *Life of Basil* or merely supervised its composition, at the most writing his own prologue, falls outside the scope of the present study. I. Ševčenko recently produced a thought-provoking study on the subject in his article "Re-reading Constantine Porphyrogenitus," in J. Shepard and S. Franklin (eds.), *Byzantine Diplomacy* (Aldershot, 1992), 167–95, esp. 172–4 and passim. Cf. also the sizeable work by J. Signes Codoñer, *El periodo del Segundo Iconoclasmo en Theophanes Continuatus* (Amsterdam, 1995), vii–xl, and A. K(azhdan), *ODB* s.v. Theophanes Continuatus. Lastly, the real author of the work bearing the name Genesios is still unknown to us. On the problem, which arises in essence from the manuscript tradition of the text, see Signes Codoner, *El periodo del Segundo Iconoclasmo*, xiii, and A. K(azhdan), *ODB* s.v. Genesios, with relevant bibliography, and the recent article by Eleonora Kountoura-Galake, "The origins of the Genesios family and its connections with the Armeniakon theme", *BZ* 93 (2000), 464–73. See also p. 186, n. 18 below.

⁹ See the discussion below, p. 191.

¹⁰ There is a substantial body of literature on this new historiographical 'technique', from which I attempt to give a representative sample here: P.J. Alexander, "Secular Biography at Byzantium", *Speculum* 15 (1940), 194–209 (= *Religious and Political History and Thought in the Byzantine Empire* [London, 1978], I); R.J.H. Jenkins, "The Classical Background of the *Scriptores post Theophanem*", *DOP* 8 (1954), 13–30

example of Byzantine historiographical *Schwarzweissmalerei*,¹¹ which sought to set the terms whereby posterity would judge the dynasty.

2) The enterprise of extolling the historical figure imposes a new structure on the text, producing an internal division in the works concerned—here, Theophanes Continuatus and Genesios—which is based on the various individuals of the history, i.e. the emperors whose lives are recounted. Although, as Alexander has rightly noted, it is possible to view this structural division as a stylistic resurgence of the classical *Kaisergeschichte*,¹² a more complex process seems to be at work, since in this case the choice is not the product of narrative, but of purely ideological determinants. Also, the appearance of the biographical form leads to further use of rhetorical or literary devices that derive directly from it, such as the *speculum principis*.¹³ It is clear that rhetoric, whose service to political practice was

(= *Studies on Byzantine History of the 9th and 10th Centuries* [London, 1970], IV); A.P. Kazhdan, “Khronika Simeona Logofeta”, *IV* 15 (1959), 125–43; idem, “O sostave tak nazyvaemoj ‘Khroniki prodolzatelej Feofana’”, *IV* 19 (1961), 76–96; H. Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner* (Munich, 1978), I, 339ff., 351ff.; A. Kazhdan, “Der Mensch in der byzantinischen Literaturgeschichte”, *JOB* 28 (1979), 1–21 (= *Authors and Texts in Byzantium* [Aldershot, 1993], II); R. Scott, “The Classical Tradition in Byzantine Historiography”, in Margaret Mullett and R. Scott (eds.), *Byzantium and the Classical Tradition* (Birmingham, 1981), 61–74; A. Markopoulos, “Sur les deux versions de la chronographie de Syméon Logothète”, *BZ* 76 (1983), 279–84; P.A. Agapitos, “Η εικόνα τοῦ αὐτοκράτορα Βασιλείου Α΄ στή φιλομακεδονική γραμματεία 867–959”, *Ἑλληνικά* 40 (1989), 285–322; Ja. N. Ljubarskij, *Prodolžatel’ Feofana, Žizneopisanie vizantijskikh carej* (St. Petersburg, 1992), 201–65; idem, “Man in Byzantine Historiography from John Malalas to Michael Psellos”, *DOP* 46 (1992), 177–86; A. Markopoulos, “Constantine the Great in Macedonian historiography: models and approaches”, in P. Magdalino (ed.), *New Constantines* (Aldershot, 1994), 159–70. Cf. also Ja. N. Ljubarskij, “New Trends in the Study of Byzantine Historiography”, *DOP* 47 (1993), 131–8. Useful in parts is the article by G. Strano, “Alcune notazioni su retorica e politica nel mito della dinastia Macedone”, *RSBN* 33 (1996) [=1997], 31–44, while there is little new to be found in Lia Raffaella Cresci, “Osservazioni sui rapporti tra ιστορία e ἐγκώμιον nella storiografia bizantina”, in M.-Gabr. Angeli Bertinelli and L. Piccirilli (eds.), *Serta Historica Antiqua* 2 (1989): 287–305. Cf. also Nike-Catherine Koutrakou, *La propagande impériale byzantine. Persuasion et réaction (VIII^e–X^e siècles)* (Athens, 1994), 157–9 and *passim*.

¹¹ I have borrowed the term from Ljubarskij, “Man in Byzantine Historiography”, 184.

¹² P. Alexander, “The Strength of Empire and Capital as Seen through Byzantine Eyes”, *Speculum* 37 (1962), 339–57, esp. 348–54 (= *Religious and Political History and Thought in the Byzantine Empire*, III).

¹³ Cf. Agapitos, “Η εικόνα”, 310–12; Ja. N. Ljubarskij, “SO Debate. Quellenforschung and/or Literary Criticism. Narrative Structure in Byzantine Historical Writings, Report”, *Symbolae Osloenses* 73 (1998), 5–22, esp. 12–13, although I do not always agree with his views.

long-standing,¹⁴ constituted—perhaps more than ever—a component *sine qua non* of this new historical writing of the tenth century. It is no accident perhaps that the Souda Lexicon, a product of the same age, contains an entry on Hermogenes (E 3046) where it is said that his rhetorical handbook is “in everyone’s hands”.¹⁵ Despite reservations expressed by Ljubarskij,¹⁶ Books I–V of Theophanes Continuatus,¹⁷ as well as Genesios (to a lesser degree), though not sharing the same compositional technique,¹⁸ together mark the first Byzantine attempt to compose a historical text centred on a single personality. Lastly, we should not overlook the fact that the *History* of Leo the Deacon, dated to the late tenth century, is composed essentially of the biographies of the two Byzantine soldier-emperors, Nikephoros Phokas and John Tzimiskes, and the Russian prince Svjatoslav. Leo’s enterprise, however, is a far cry from the texts that were composed in praise of Basil.¹⁹

3) The main concern of this new compositional approach lies not only in the desire to satisfy curiosity about the past, but also—and principally—to gather precisely those features that were to form the basis, via a complex of moral examples and symbols, of the ideals, way of life, and models worthy of emulation. The *Life of Basil*, as a grandiloquent rhetorical *andrias*,²⁰ meets all the requirements; so too does the *History* of Leo the Deacon, irrespective of whether his biographies have a different starting point.

¹⁴ The study by Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, 1991), 123–41, is particularly useful with respect to this issue.

¹⁵ This passage is discussed by G.T. Dennis, “Imperial Panegyric: Rhetoric and Reality”, in H. Maguire (ed.), *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204* (Washington, DC, 1997), 131–40, esp. 131.

¹⁶ “*Quellenforschung* and/or Literary Criticism”, 15.

¹⁷ It is widely accepted today that Book VI of Theophanes Continuatus has nothing to do with the historiographical specifications of Constantine Porphyrogenitus; see Hunger, *Profane Literatur*, I, 342–3; A. Kazhdan, *ODB* s.v. Theophanes Continuatus, as well as p. 195, n. 62 below.

¹⁸ On this much discussed issue, which is directly related to the sources of both works, see Hunger, *Profane Literatur*, I, 341 n. 58. Cf. also the recent remarks by J. Ljubarskij, “Man in Byzantine Historiography”, 184 n. 51 and *Prodolžatel’ Feofana*, 227–35, with references to his earlier studies. See also: J. Signes-Codoñer, “Constantino Porfirogénito y la fuente común de Genesio y Theophanes Continuatus I–IV”, *BZ* 86/87 (1993/94), 319–41 (repeated in his book *El periodo del Segundo Iconoclasmo*, 637–61) and Vassiliki N. Vlyssidou, “Οι αποκλίσεις Γενεσίου και Συνέχειας Θεοφάνη για τη βασιλεία του Μιχαήλ Γ’”, *Σύμμεικτα* 10 (1996), 75–103. Cf. also Kountoura-Galake, “The origins of the Genesios family”, 467 n. 27. The issue remains far from resolved. See p. 184, n. 8 above.

¹⁹ See p. 192 below.

²⁰ Cf. Agapitos, “Η εικόνα”, 311.

4) The noble descent of the principal characters is highlighted in line with the prescriptions of Pseudo-Menander. This approach was to become an inviolable rule from the eleventh century onwards.²¹ As long as he lived, it was known that Basil I was the issue of 'ordinary individuals of unassuming background',²² but shortly after his death his son Leo VI claimed that Basil was a descendant of the great Parthian family of the Arsacids.²³ Porphyrogenitus not only reinforced the account of Leo the Wise, but also traced the descent of Basil's mother to none other than Constantine the Great (Theoph. Cont. 215).²⁴ Nikephoros Phokas had even more eminent origins: not only was he descended from Constantine the Great, and his family's roots went back to the great Roman family of the Fabians, or so the extensive genealogical tree which Attaleiates claimed to have come across in 'an old book' (217–30, esp. 218) would have us believe. In the case of Phokas, abundant evidence suggests that texts were written with the sole object of extolling the emperor. Thus a) Log. B,²⁵ which will now be the focus of our attention, gives a detailed account of the deeds of Nikephoros Phokas the Elder,²⁶ the

²¹ See A.P. Kazhdan and M. McCormick, "The Social World of the Byzantine Court", in Maguire (ed.), *Byzantine Court Culture*, 168.

²² A. Markopoulos, "An Anonymous Laudatory Poem in Honor of Basil I", *DOP* 46 (1992), 225–32, esp. 230 (l. 82).

²³ ἡ κάτω δὴ ταύτη τῆς φθορᾶς γένεσις εἰς Ἀρσακίδας αὐτὸν ἀνήγεν': see A. Vogt and I. Hausherr, *Oraison funèbre de Basile I par son fils Léon VI le Sage* (Rome, 1932), 44.

²⁴ Cf. also Genesios, 76–77 (Thurn). On Basil's genealogy see, principally, G. Moravcsik, "Sagen und Legenden über Kaiser Basileios I.", *DOP* 15 (1961), 61–126 (= *Studia Byzantina* [Amsterdam, 1967], 147–220); P. Magdalino, "Observations on the Nea Ekklesia of Basil I", *JÖB* 37 (1987), 51–64; idem, "Basil I, Leo VI, and the Feast of the Prophet Elijah", *JÖB* 38 (1988), 193–6; Agapitos, "Η εἰκόνα", 289–97, 302ff. and passim; Markopoulos, "Laudatory Poem", 226–9; idem, "Constantine the Great", 160–64; idem, "Ἀποσημειώσεις στὸν Λέοντα ΣΤ' τὸν Σοφὸ", in *Θυμίαμα στη μνήμη της Λασκαρίνας Μπούρα* (Athens, 1994), I, 193–201, esp. 196–8 and Federica Ciccolella, "Three Anacreontic Poems Assigned to Photius", *OCP* 64 (1998), 305–28. Further bibliographical references can be found in these studies.

²⁵ This is the text edited by V.M. Istrin, *Khronika Georgija Amartola v drevnem slav-janorusskom perevod* (Petrograd, 1922), II, 1–65, after the Vaticanus gr. 153. F. Hirsch (*Byzantinische Studien* [Leipzig, 1876], 35–51 and passim) was indirectly aware of the Vatican manuscript, which H. Grégoire in effect brought to light: "La carrière du premier Nicéphore Phocas", in *Προσφορά εἰς Στίλπωνα Π. Κυριακίδη* (Thessaloniki, 1953), 232–54, esp. 240ff.

²⁶ See J.-Cl. Cheynet, "Les Phocas", in G. Dagron et al., *Le traité sur la guérilla (De velitatione) de l'empereur Nicéphore Phocas (963–969)* (Paris, 1986), 291–6 (with bibliography).

emperor's grandfather, while one manuscript containing the same version includes also the victories of the emperor in Crete, Asia Minor and Syria;²⁷ and b) Leo the Deacon and Skylitzes, as Kazhdan demonstrated 40 years ago,²⁸ resorted to a pro-Macedonian text (now lost) in composing their histories; Attaleiates drew on the genealogy of the Phokas line; and, according to Pseudo-Psellos, in the eleventh century there were widely disseminated texts that extolled the emperor Nikephoros Phokas (§105, p. 98 Aerts).²⁹

At this point it is worth turning our attention to the chronicle 'cycle' of the Logothete.³⁰ Since the nineteenth century, thanks to the thorough research of Hirsch, it has been recognised that Log. A was favourably disposed towards Romanos Lekapenos.³¹ This, how-

²⁷ See A. Markopoulos, "Le témoignage du Vaticanus gr. 163 pour la période entre 945–963", *Σύμμεικτα* 3 (1979), 83–119, esp. 87–89, 94f.; idem, "Sur les deux versions", *passim*. The recent study by J.M. Featherstone, "The Logothete Chronicle in Vat gr 163", *OCF* 64 (1998), 419–34, does not concern our subject here.

²⁸ A.P. Kazhdan, "Iz istorii vizantijskoj khronografii X v. 2. Istočniki L' va D' jakona i Skilitsy dlja istorii tretej četverti X stoletija", *IV* 20 (1961), 106–28.

²⁹ On the way in which Phokas was praised by his contemporaries see Rosemary Morris, "The Two Faces of Nikephoros Phokas", *BMGS* 12 (1988), 83–115; A. Markopoulos, "Zu den Biographien des Nikephoros Phokas", *JOB* 38 (1988), 225–33; idem, "Constantine the Great", 166–70, to which should be added the recent study by M.D. Lauxtermann on John Geometres, a celebrated supporter of Phokas: "John Geometres—Poet and Soldier", *Byzantion* 68 (1998), 356–80. For later texts, see Ja. Ljubarskij, "Nikephoros Phokas in Byzantine Historical Writings," *Bsl* 54 (1993), 245–53.

³⁰ The question of whether Symeon the Logothete and Symeon Metaphrastes were in fact one and the same individual remains a desideratum for research in the field. Kazhdan always insisted on the separation of the two ("Khronika Simeona Logofeta", 128), as is indicated by the separate entries in the *ODB* (Symeon Logothete, contributed by Kazhdan, and Symeon Metaphrastes by Kazhdan and N.P. Ševčenko). The opposite view is held by most other researchers: see, for example, the earlier studies of V. Vasilievskij, "O zizni i trudakh Simeona Metafrasta", *Žurnal Ministerstva Narodnago Prosvješčenija* 212 (1880), 379–437; "Sinodalnij kodeks Metafrasta", *Žurnal Ministerstva Narodnago Prosvješčenija* 311 (1897), 332–404 and C. de Boor, "Weiteres zur Chronik des Logotheten", *BZ* 10 (1901), 70–90, esp. 89–90, as well as more recent contributions to the debate by N.M. Panagiotakes, "Φύλλα χειρογράφου της Χρονογραφίας του Λογοθέτου (Ἑλληνικὸς κώδιξ Σεραγίου ἀρ. 37) ἐν τοῖς καταλοίτοις Βασ. Μυστακίδου", *EEBS* 35 (1966–67), 259–78; Hunger, *Profane Literatur*, I, 355; A. Ph. Markopoulos, *Ἡ χρονογραφία τοῦ Ψευδοσυμεῶν καὶ οἱ πηγές της* (Ioannina, 1978), 12ff.; idem, "Sur les deux versions", 279 and *passim*; Treadgold, "The Chronological Accuracy", 160; Alexandra Sotiroudis, *Die handschriftliche Überlieferung des 'Georgius Continuuatus' (Redaktion A)* (Thessaloniki, 1989), 14. It is hoped that the current research by Chr. Högel will throw new light on the subject.

³¹ See Hirsch, *Byzantinische Studien*, 80–86. His views were quickly accepted by scholars. Of earlier work in the field it is worth consulting S. Shestakov, "Parižskaja rukopis khroniki Simeona Logotheta", *IV* 4 (1897), 167–83; "O rukopisjakh Simeona

ever, does not imply that the Logothete's text is an encomiastic *biography* of Romanos. Indeed, the chronicler's inclination to praise the emperor would seem to be based exclusively on a series of favourable judgments regarding the person of the emperor and his achievements, which is inserted into the last section of the chronicle ending with the death of Romanos in 948.³²

However, in the case of Log. B the author does not devote his energy to praising only Romanos Lekapenos, but, as mentioned above, he also praises an earlier member of the Phokas line, as well as the emperor Nikephoros Phokas (963–969) himself. This version of the Logothete, which, it may be added, is a markedly more refined work than Log. A, was undoubtedly written during the reign of Nikephoros Phokas or very shortly afterwards.³³ Imitation of rhetorical models is absent from Log. B, and when encomiastic elements are introduced in order to praise the Phokas family, just as in the case of Romanos in Log. A, they are introduced at moments which, in the judgment of the chronicler, are appropriate so that the reader is amply prepared for the praise bestowed.³⁴

On examining the background from which these historical works originated it is possible to discern two wholly different, and diametrically opposed, textual subsets. The first—whose writing is consistent either with the objectives of the Macedonian dynasty or with the high aspirations of the Phokas family—comprises the texts which exude the atmosphere of the imperial court and have, on the whole, a triumphal tone: Theophanes Continuatus, Genesios, and Log. B, the 'official' historical texts of the period. It is clear that in the mid tenth century the imperial milieu was in a position not only to decide *what* the history would contain, but also *how* historical works would

Logotheta", *IV* 5 (1898), 19–62 and C. de Boor, "Die Chronik des Logotheten", *BZ* 6 (1897), 233–84; "Weiteres", *passim*. Among the most recent contributions to the subject I note Kazhdan, "Khronika Simeona Logofeta", 141ff. and *ODB* s.v. Symeon Logothete; Hunger, *Profane Literatur*, I, 349–50; Markopoulos, "Sur les deux versions", 279–81. Cf. also A.E. Müller, "Das Testament des Romanos I. Lakapenos", *BZ* 92 (1999), 68–73, esp. 71ff., which draws attention again to the conflicting accounts of Log. A. For a brief orientation through the texts contained in this group of the Logothete see Hunger, *Profane Literatur*, I, 357.

³² These have been listed by Hirsch, *Byzantinische Studien*, 82ff.

³³ See pp. 187–8 above and notes 25 and 27, with relevant bibliography.

³⁴ See Grégoire, "La carrière", 250–52; cf. also Markopoulos, "Le témoignage", 88.

henceforth be written.³⁵ It is legitimate, therefore, at this point to speak of a particular court conception of how history should be written, with specific aesthetic criteria, compositional consistency, perspective and theoretical substance.³⁶

Log. A, Pseudo-Symeon and Leo the Deacon were produced outside the ambit of the court and do not exhibit the rhetorical flights of fancy of the histories deriving from the palace. Indeed, Log. A, while not overtly expressing antipathy towards the rule of Michael III, is sufficiently removed from the new concerns of the Macedonians that he not only gives a lengthy account of Basil's conspiracy against the last representative of the Amorion dynasty, but even provides all the gory details of the gruesome death that befell Michael's assassins.³⁷ Similarly, he does not follow the mass of texts that talk of Basil's Arsacid ancestry, and he bestows praise on Romanos Lekapenos where the occasion allows.³⁸ Of the other two authors, Pseudo-Symeon, as a 'mechanical compiler of his sources', to quote Kazhdan's characterization,³⁹ has little to offer the present discussion, while Leo the Deacon begins his historical account at the time when his service at the palace ended and he, most probably, was appointed Metropolitan of Karia.⁴⁰

³⁵ It is now recognized that the circle of Porphyrogenitus produced a more sophisticated text of Theophanes the Confessor. See the latest study by P. Yannopoulos, "Les vicissitudes historiques de la *Chronique* de Théophane", *Byzantion* 70 (2000), 527–53 with the relevant bibliography to which add P.G. Preobrazenskij, *Letopisnoe povestopovanie sv. Theofana Ispovednika* (Vienna, 1912).

³⁶ I use the term "court perception" with certain reservations. The comments of P. Magdalino, "In Search of the Byzantine Courtier: Leo Choirosphaktes and Constantine Manasses", in Maguire (ed.) *Byzantine Court Culture*, 141–65, can be said to mark the starting point for the more extensive investigation that is required in this area.

³⁷ A typical instance of *mors persecutorum*; see the recent article by P.A. Agapitos, "Ο λογοτεχνικός θάνατος τῶν ἐχθρῶν στήν Ἀυτοβιογραφία, τοῦ Νικηφόρου Βλεμμύδη", *Ἑλληνικά* 48 (1998), 29–46, esp. 36ff. Cf. also Hunger, *Profane Literatur*, I, 350.

³⁸ See p. 000, n. 31 above.

³⁹ Kazhdan, "Der Mensch", 12.

⁴⁰ It is tempting to see this, with S.A. Ivanov ("Polemičeskaja napravlennost' 'Istorii' L' va D' jakona", *IV* 43 [1982], 74–80, esp. 79–80), as evidence that Leo wished to protest about the tendency for partiality evident in historical writing during the reign of Basil II. While this view is attractive, it is hard to back with hard facts. Leo, however, can be seen to insert his own comments into his text, sometimes being particularly caustic even in his assessment of emperors, as in the case of his treatment of Basil II (10, 8). On Leo's intrusions into his historical narrative see Ja. N. Ljubarskij, "Writers Intrusion' in early Byzantine Literature", *XVIII^e Congrès International des Études Byzantines, Rapports pléniers* (Moscow, 1991), 433–56, esp.

The way in which the histories of the tenth century portray the figures—mainly male⁴¹—of their narratives is obviously not uniform. It could hardly be denied, however, that the tendency to give legendary dimensions to the protagonists is at times excessive, and clearly serves a specific agenda.⁴² Thus, Basil I is presented by Porphyrogenitus as possessing the undivided favour of God, who portends his accession by supernatural signs (*Life of Basil*, 222. 225–6), and also stands by him at every stage in his eventful life: at times He protects him in the form of an eagle whose wings provide shade from the heat of the sun (218–9); at others, it is expressly stated—both at the monastery of Diomedes (223–4)⁴³ and in Patras (226–7)—that Basil is God’s chosen one and is destined to rule. It goes without saying that Basil, as monarch, is the model *par excellence*, possessing as he does all those human virtues that befit the Byzantine *basileus* (justice,⁴⁴ charity, generosity, humility, magnanimity etc).⁴⁵ When it comes to the founder of the Macedonian dynasty, everything revolves around a positive axis.

440–41. The issue has also been examined by Ruth Macrides, “The Historian in the History”, in C.N. Constantinides et al. (eds.), *Φιλλέλλην, Studies in Honour of Robert Browning* (Venice, 1996), 205–24. See also p. 192 below.

⁴¹ Kazhdan very rightly pointed out that Byzantine literature was written ‘von Menschen, für Menschen und über Menschen’ (“Der Mensch”, 11). On the question of the male presence in Byzantine literature, besides Kazhdan’s article, see also the earlier and virtually classic treatment of the subject by A. Kazhdan and G. Constable, *People and Power in Byzantium* (Washington, DC, 1982), which uses on the whole traditional analytical methods to explore the term *homo byzantinus*. The subject is explored from a quite different angle by Ch. Barber, “Homo Byzantinus?”, in Liz James (ed.), *Women, Men and Eunuchs. Gender in Byzantium* (London-New York, 1997), 185–99. The study by Ljubarskij, “Man in Byzantine Historiography”, examines just one aspect of the subject—the imperial presence in the histories—concerning us here. For a contemporary treatment of the subject of the male presence in historical writing see Karen Hagemann and S. Dudink, “Masculinity as Practice and Representation”, in *Proceedings. 19th International Congress of Historical Sciences* (Oslo, 2000), 283–98, esp. 283–6.

⁴² See P. Magdalino, “The Distance of the Past in Early Medieval Byzantium (VII–X Centuries)”, in *Ideologie e pratiche del reimpiego nell’ Alto Medioevo. Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull’ Alto Medioevo* 46 (1999), 115–46, esp. 127.

⁴³ This is another borrowing, after the Arsakids, from Leo VI: Vogt—Hausherr, *Oraison funèbre*, 52–3.

⁴⁴ On the notion of ‘justice’ and the ways in which it appears in Byzantine historical works of the period examined here see Angeliki E. Laiou, “Law, Justice, and the Byzantine Historians: Ninth to Twelfth Centuries”, in Angeliki E. Laiou and D. Simon (eds.), *Law and Society in Byzantium: Ninth–Twelfth Centuries* (Washington, DC, 1994), 151–85.

⁴⁵ References can be found in Agapitos, “H εἰκόνα”, 320–22. See also Sp. Vryonis

In contrast with Porphyrogenitus' Basil, the heroes of Leo the Deacon are far more human in their portrayal and, moreover, are not graced by divine favour. While giving us a lengthy physical and psychological portrait of two of his protagonists, Nikephoros Phokas and John Tzimiskes, it is the impressive physical strength and martial prowess of the two figures that are the focus of Leo's praise, while all else takes second place. The weaknesses of the heroes are not concealed (e.g. Tzimiskes and drink [6,3 Hase]), while malign fortune (5, 8) is essentially held responsible for the death of Phokas, who however was unswerving in matters relating to the dispensation of justice and unforgiving of those who erred—virtues that, as Leo tells us in the same passage, were not valued as highly as they should have been. Unlike the *Life of Basil*, Leo's account does not contain fictional elements and he carefully and systematically expends considerable energy on extolling the male factor in historical events, deliberately undermining the role of women—to whom indeed he even attributes the murder of Phokas—and of eunuchs, for whom his sexual contempt is overt. The perfect ruler is above all a perfect warrior, a view that reaches back to classical Roman (and Homeric) ideals.⁴⁶

Another matter characteristic of Byzantine historiography in the late tenth century is the evidence for historical works of a biographical nature which have either been lost or which left, at best, indirect traces. If we examine, once again, the celebrated proemium of Skylitzes,⁴⁷ it transpires that just five of the fourteen authors referred

Jr., "The Vita Basilii of Constantine Porphyrogenitus and the absorption of Armenians in Byzantine society", in *Ευφρόσυνον. Αφιέρωμα στον Μανόλη Χατζηδάκη* (Athens, 1992), II, 676–93, esp. 698ff. (= *Byzantine Institutions, Society and Culture* [New Rochelle, NY, 1997], I, 51–80). On the background to specifically imperial virtues see the remarks of Margaret Mullett, "The 'Other' in Byzantium", in D.C. Smythe (ed.), *Strangers to Themselves: The Byzantine Outsider* (Aldershot, 2000), 1–22, esp. 10 n. 53. Cf. also Koutrakou, *La propagande impériale*, 299ff.

⁴⁶ Kazhdan-Constable, *People and Power in Byzantium*, 110–11, presented a somewhat superficial comparison of Porphyrogenitus' Basil I and Leo the Deacon's Nikephoros Phokas. On Leo's perceptions of the male figure in his history see A. Markopoulos, "Ζητήματα κοινωνικού φύλου στον Λέοντα τὸν Διάκονο", *Ἐνθύμησις Νικολάου Μ. Παναγιωτάκη* (Heraklio, 2000), 475–93 (this study needs to be read in conjunction with the present text). Cf. also Ja. Ljubarskij, "John Kinnamos as a Writer", in Cordula Scholz – G. Makris (eds.), *Πολύπλευρος Νοῦς, Miscellanea für Peter Schreiner zu seinem 60. Geburtstag* (Munich-Leipzig, 2000), 164–73, esp. 169 n. 20.

⁴⁷ See N.M. Panagiotakes, *Λέων ὁ Διάκονος* (Athens, 1965), 18–20; idem, "Fragments

to are known to us: George Synkellos (3, 6–7.12–13 Thurn), Theophanes (3, 8–9.14–16), Psellos (3, 19), Genesios (3, 27) and Leo *Asianos* (3, 28), who is in all likelihood none other than Leo the Deacon. Another author, the prolific Niketas the Paphlagonian, wrote, among other things, the *Life of Ignatios*, and Skylitzes is in all probability referring to this work in his proemium (3, 26).⁴⁸ Theodore Daphnopates (cited in the same passage) is thought by some to be the author of one—usually the sixth—book of Theophanes Continuatus, but in spite, recently, of the fact that Ševčenko favours this attribution,⁴⁹ I feel it has not been proved convincingly.⁵⁰ Of the remaining seven historians, Sikeliotes ‘διδάσκαλος’ (3, 18) is surely a phantom, since while many manuscripts refer to him as a historian we have nothing by him; Manuel (3, 27) can perhaps be identified with the author of the biography of John Kourkouas, which is cited by Theophanes Continuatus (426–428),⁵¹ Nikephoros the deacon of Phrygia (3, 27–28)

of a Lost Eleventh Century Byzantine Historical Work?”, in Φιλέλλην, *Studies in Honour of Robert Browning*, 321–57, esp. 338–9; cf. also Hunger, *Profane Literatur*, I, 389ff. and A. Markopoulos, “Ο Διγενής Ἀκρίτης καὶ ἡ βυζαντινὴ χρονογραφία. Μία πρώτη προσέγγιση”, *Ἀριάδνη* 5 (1989), 165–71, esp. 167–8. See also Signes Codoñer, *El periodo del Segundo Iconoclasmo*, xxviii–xxxii, while some interesting insights into Skylitzes’ technique were recently made by I. Grigoriadis, “A study of the *prooimion* of Zonaras’ chronicle in relation to other 12th-century historical *prooimia*”, *BZ* 91 (1998), 327–44, esp. 331–3 (repeated in his book *Linguistic and Literary Studies in the Epitome Historion of John Zonaras* [Thessaloniki, 1998], 29–51).

⁴⁸ Elsewhere I had expressed the view (*Ἡ χρονογραφία τοῦ Ψευδοσυμεών*, 168–70) that Niketas Paphlagon may well have been the author of an ecclesiastical history which was marked by a strongly anti-Photian stance, as far as we are able to gather from a note in ms. Baroccianus gr. 142 which refers to this lost work. I made the suggestion that perhaps Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos used this work as one of his sources. A few years later F. Winkermann, “Hat Niketas David Paphlagon ein umfassendes Geschichtswerk verfaßt? Ein Beitrag zur Quellenfrage des Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopulos und des Pseudo-Symeon”, *JÖB* 37 (1987), 137–52, came to the opposite conclusion. The issue has been broached once again more recently by S.A. Paschalidis, *Νικήτας Δαβίδ Παφλαγών* (Thessaloniki, 1999), 253–8, who accepted my opinion while suggesting that the *Life of Ignatios* is no less than an extract from the anti-Photian work of Niketas David, a possibility that cannot be ruled out, of course. I was unable to consult the work by F. Lebrun, *Nicetas le Paphlagonien, Sept homélies inédites* (Leuven, 1997), which was reviewed (somewhat critically), together with the study of Paschalidis, by P. Yannopoulos, “Autour de Nicetas le Paphlagonien”, *Byzantion* 69 (1999), 599–602.

⁴⁹ I. Ševčenko, “The Title of and Preface to *Theophanes Continuatus*”, *Boletino della Badia greca di Grottaferrata* 52 (1998), 77–93, esp. 91 and n. 21, which accepts for the most part the views of Šjuzjumov on the subject.

⁵⁰ Hunger (*Profane Literatur*, I, 343, 391) considers this relationship a distinct possibility. See my own comments on the issue in “Théodore Daphnopatès et la Continuation de Théophane”, *JÖB* 35 (1985), 171–82.

⁵¹ On Manuel see p. 195 below.

and the monk John Lydos (4, 31–32) remain unknown; Demetrios of Kyzikos (4, 30) wrote a number of theological treatises, while, lastly, the two Theodores—of Side (3, 28) and of Sebasteia (4, 29–30)—are known to have written histories (significantly, Theodore of Sebasteia is said to have written a biography of Basil II), though both are lost.⁵²

To recapitulate, we may note that of the historians mentioned in Skylitzes whose works have not survived, two—Manuel and Theodore of Sebasteia—composed works that can be described as biographical. Moreover, there is nothing to exclude the possibility that one of the writers about whom little or nothing is known, such as Demetrios of Kyzikos or John Lydos the monk, lies behind the sources used by Skylitzes, as in the case of the so-called ‘war journal’.⁵³ However, we should be particularly cautious when dealing with the chronicler’s sources, as his critical powers leave much to be desired. It seems that he did not base his account on all the texts he refers to in his proemium, and he does not always cite them;⁵⁴ this is the case with his use of Theophanes Continuatus and with the biography—now lost—of Kekaumenos which, as Shepard has demonstrated,⁵⁵ he clearly consulted.

Another subject which is worth investigating is the likelihood that biography was used not simply to praise the emperors, but also to promote individuals who aspired to the throne.⁵⁶ It was in the tenth century that a number of high-ranking military figures came to the fore,⁵⁷ generally members of aristocratic families that were often linked to one another by marriage ties, who having secured for themselves

⁵² Panagiotakes (“Fragments of a Lost Eleventh Century Byzantine Historical Work?”) attributed the fragments of a lost historical text, which he identified in the *Miracles of St Eugenios* (a work by John Lazaropoulos of the 14th century), to Theodore of Sebasteia.

⁵³ Hunger, *Profane Literatur*, I, 391.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ See the latest relevant study by J. Shepard, “A suspected source of Scylitzes’ *Synopsis Historion*: the great Catacalon Cecaumenos”, *BMGS* 16 (1992), 171–81. Cf. also Charlotte Roueché, “Byzantine Writers and Readers: Storytelling in the Eleventh Century”, in R. Beaton (ed.), *The Greek Novel A.D. 1–1985* (London-New York-Sydney, 1988), 123–33, esp. 128ff.

⁵⁶ See the observation by Cheynet, “Les Phocas”, 290. J. Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society in the Byzantine World, 565–1204* (London, 1999), 252–3, simply mentions the subject.

⁵⁷ “Die rüden Militärs”, as H.-G. Beck aptly terms them: *Das byzantinische Jahrtausend*, 2nd ed. (Munich, 1994), 301.

considerable power and wealth began to doubt the supremacy of the Macedonian dynasty.⁵⁸ While the rebellion of Constantine Doukas in 913 proved abortive,⁵⁹ Nikephoros Phokas' seizure of power just fifty years later⁶⁰ seems to mark the beginning of a process that culminated with Alexios Komnenos in 1081. Thus, it is no accident that many biographical texts were written for the Phokas family, and either prepare, far from the court, for Nikephoros' ascent to the imperial office, detailing not only his own achievements on the battlefield but also those of his predecessors, or seek to maintain—from within the palace—the picture of the worthy soldier who now governs the state.⁶¹ These biographer-encomiasts are above all concerned to extol their subjects' martial prowess and, to a lesser degree, their actions in daily life. A comparison of the encomia on Nikephoros Phokas the Elder and the emperor Nikephoros Phokas contained in Log. B with a passage from Manuel which we know indirectly from Book VI of Theophanes Continuatus⁶² (and, in part, from Skylitzes, 224), in which the varied career of John Kourkouas is described, as well as a further passage from Skylitzes (360–63) relating the deeds of Eustathios Daphnomeles,⁶³ demonstrates that these texts possess a closely related compositional substratum and that they spare no praise

⁵⁸ A classic description of the situation was given by R.J.H. Jenkins, "The 'Flight' of Samonas", *Speculum* 23 (1948), 217–35, esp. 219–20 (= *Studies on Byzantine History*, X). See the most recent assessment by J.-Cl. Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance (963–1210)* (Paris, 1990), 191ff., 213ff. and passim; idem, "L'aristocratie byzantine (VIII^e–XIII^e s.)", *Journal des Savants* (juillet-décembre 2000), 281–322. Cf. also Kazhdan-McCormick, "The Social World of the Byzantine Court", in Maguire (ed.) *Byzantine Court Culture*, 168–75. An interesting article is that of B. Limousin, "Les lettrés en société: 'φίλος βίος' ou 'πολιτικός βίος'", *Byzantion* 69 (1999), 344–65, although it approaches the subject from a quite different angle.

⁵⁹ For the literary impact of this, see Christine G. Angelidi, 'Ο βίος τοῦ ὁσίου Βασιλείου τοῦ Νέου (Ioannina, 1980), 137–46 and St. Alexiou, *Βασίλειος Διγενῆς Ἀκρίτης καὶ τὸ ἄσμα τοῦ Ἀρμούρη*, (Athens, 1985), ξ'.

⁶⁰ Dagron (*Le traité sur la guérilla*, 290) used the terms 'légendaire et révélatrice' to describe the conversation (in which the abilities and aspirations of Phokas are at least perceptible), as related by Zonaras (16, 23 Bonn), between Emperor Romanos II and Nikephoros Phokas.

⁶¹ See pp. 187–8, 192 above.

⁶² We should not omit to mention here that Book VI of Theophanes Continuatus, which largely follows Log. B, is favourably disposed towards the major families of the tenth century. It is in this light that we should see the use of Manuel by its anonymous compiler (or compilers). See Kazhdan, "O sostave tak nazываемoj 'Khroniki prodolzatelej Feofana'", 90–96, who does not however exhaust the subject. The same applies to the entry by Kazhdan in the *ODB* (see p. 186, n. 17 above).

⁶³ See Roueché's remarks in "Byzantine Writers and Readers", 127–8.

for the deeds of their protagonists, who, of course, could not but be the best of their generation, gaining victory over the Arabs and the Bulgarians, besieging the strongholds of those who denied Christ, capturing prisoners of war, and so on. The other elements (faith, justice, friendship, and various other virtues conforming to Pseudo-Menander's recipe) simply served to complement the positive portrait of the subject of the encomium.⁶⁴ I have little doubt that the biographies that are now lost to us, such as the life of Basil II by Theodore of Sebasteia (which was clearly written in order for Basil to have his own biography once he had taken over the reins of power) and, later, the biography of Kekaumenos must have had precisely the same structure as the texts we have just discussed. It was a mechanistic approach to writing, lacking originality and laden with commonplaces, that barely stands comparison with the virtually 'organic' structure characterizing the texts of the circle of Porphyrogenitus. Perhaps it is hasty to speak of professional writers in the service of the powerful from the second half of the tenth century—a phenomenon that would become more frequent in later years—but I believe that the evidence points in this direction.

Before closing, it may be worth asking whether the individuals praised in the encomia imposed specific requirements on their writers with regard to the style and content of the works to be composed in their honour. The evidence is hardly sufficient to answer this question satisfactorily, although we do have an epigram of the eleventh century by John Mauropous (96 Bollig-Lagarde) titled "On ceasing to write the Chronicle." The epigram appears to reveal that the Metropolitan of Euchaita decided to abandon the writing of a chronicle that he had been asked to write in someone's (Constantine IX Monomachos?) honour, as he was convinced that texts of this kind should not contain inaccuracies while praise that is not genuine should be the reserve of panegyrists.⁶⁵ This epigram led Beck to suggest that Mauropous was suffering from historian's block: he

⁶⁴ See J. Ljubarskij, "Why is the Alexiad a Masterpiece of Byzantine Literature?"; in J.O. Rosenquist (ed.), *Λειμών. Studies Presented to Lennart Rydén on his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (Uppsala, 1996), 127–41, esp. 131; idem, "John Kinnamos as a Writer", 169ff.

⁶⁵ See P. Lemerle, *Cinq études sur le XI^e siècle byzantin* (Paris, 1977), 201 n. 14; Hunger, *Profane Literatur*, II, 170, n. 283; A. Karpozilos, *Συμβολή στη μελέτη τοῦ βίου καὶ τοῦ ἔργου τοῦ Ἰωάννη Μαυρόποδος* (Ioannina, 1982), 33–4. Cf. also A. Kazhdan, "Some Problems in the Biography of John Mauropous. II", *Byzantion* 65 (1995), 378.

was under pressure, if not to distort reality, at least to keep his customer happy.⁶⁶ While I believe we should use words like 'customer', 'commission' and other such terms with extreme caution, it is surely utopian to imagine that a historian can wholly avoid external commitments that inevitably compromise historiographical objectivity. Possibly this is evidence of a kind of self-criticism on the part of Mauropous, which led him, unfortunately, to cease writing his history. However, more evidence would be required in order to state the case with any degree of certainty, and such evidence, alas, is unlikely to be found.

⁶⁶ Beck, *Das byzantinische Jahrtausend*, 129.

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BYZANTINE POETRY AND THE PARADOX OF BASIL II'S REIGN

Marc Lauxtermann

The sad fate of most publications is to be forgotten as soon as they appear. They end up in the careless wastebasket of time, and more often than not, justly so. Sometimes, however, it is worthwhile to rummage through this scholarly wastebasket and extract from it small memorabilia that do not deserve to linger there forever. Such is the case of Sola's edition of a group of poems found in Vat. gr. 753 (11th c.), fol. 4^{r-v}, a publication that is entirely unknown although it is of great interest to Byzantinists.¹ The poems are anonymous in the manuscript, but style and metre strongly suggest that we are dealing with one and the same author.² For the sake of convenience I will call this anonymous author Anon. Sola. Seeing that the earliest poem dates from 980–992 and the latest from 1034–1041, it is reasonable to assume that Anon. Sola lived to be quite old. In epigram no. 3, Anon. Sola celebrates the golden and silver decoration of the miraculous image of the Holy Virgin in the famous Blachernai bathhouse, the *λοῦμα*, in which a therapeutic spring flowed; the text tells us that the holy water sprang forth from the Virgin's hands. The golden and silver plates attached to this image were donated by Patriarch Nicholas II Chrysoberges (980–992).³ No. 2 dates from 1028–1034. It is a dedicatory epigram celebrating the construction of a pavement inlaid with porphyry and silver, which had been commissioned by Romanos III Argyros and his wife Zoe. The pavement was to be found in the church of Christ Antiphonetes. This is probably the

¹ G. Sola, "Giambografi sconosciuti del secolo XI", *Roma e l'Oriente* 11 (1916), 18–27, 149–153.

² See M.D. Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry from Pisides to Geometres. Texts and Contexts* (forthcoming, 2003), Appendix V for Anon. Sola. Despite the misleading title of his paper, Sola himself asserts, at the bottom of p. 19, that the poems seem to be "dello stesso autore".

³ On the precise date of Nicholas II's patriarchate, see J. Darrouzès, "Sur la chronologie du patriarche Antoine III Stoudite", *REB* 46 (1988,) 55–60.

same church as the one built by Empress Zoe.⁴ No. 8 is an epitaph on Helen, the first wife of Romanos III, who was forced to retire to a monastery and to become a nun (renamed Maria) when her husband assumed power; she died in 1032. No. 6 is a dedicatory epigram celebrating the rebuilding of a church dedicated to the Virgin Gorgoepekoos. Its two donors were the emperor Michael IV (1034–1041) and the empress Zoe.⁵ No. 5 is once again a dedicatory epigram: it states that a certain Theoktistos, who was *droungarios*, *patrikios*, *vestes* and *praipositos*, dedicated a church to the Holy Virgin.

And now a question for the attentive reader: among the throng of emperors, powerful ladies, patriarchs and high-ranking dignitaries mentioned in these poems, who is the person passed over in total silence although one should expect to find his name? The answer is of course: Basil II. While Anon. Sola mentions the patriarch Nicholas II as the donor responsible for the embellishment of the image in the Blachernai shrine, the *Patria* explicitly states that it was the emperor Basil II who commissioned the revetment fashioned of silver gilt.⁶ Since the epigram of Anon. Sola appears to be an authentic verse inscription, the credit for the Blachernai image should probably go to the patriarch rather than the emperor. Whatever the case, it is quite remarkable to see that Anon. Sola, an author of occasional poems and dedicatory epigrams who lived during the reign of Basil II, does not mention the emperor at all. And neither does Mauropous, born shortly after 987,⁷ in the many poems that have come down to us. Although he came of age around the year 1005

⁴ See K.N. Sathas, *Μεσαιωνική Βιβλιοθήκη* (Athens 1872–94, repr. Hildesheim 1972), VII, 163. 3–5. See also P. Magdalino, “Constantinopolitana”, in I. Ševčenko and I. Hutter (eds.), *AETOS. Studies in Honour of Cyril Mango* (Stuttgart-Leipzig 1998), 225–7.

⁵ Sola, “Giambografi”, 151, suggests that the νέος Μιχαήλ mentioned in the epigram is Michael V Kalaphates (1041–1042), but the four months of his reign are too short a period to rebuild a church from its foundations: βάθρων ἀπ’ αὐτῶν σοὶ νεουργοῦσι δόμον (line 4). Moreover, shortly after becoming emperor, Michael V removed Zoe from the palace.

⁶ *Scriptores Originum Constantinopolitanarum*, ed. T. Preger (Leipzig, 1901–07), 283. 4–9.

⁷ See A. Karpozilos, *Συμβολή στη μελέτη τοῦ βίου καὶ τοῦ ἔργου τοῦ Ἰωάννη Μαυρόποδος* (Ioannina, 1982), 70–74. In a later publication (A. Karpozilos, *The Letters of Ioannes Mauropous Metropolitan of Euchaita* (Thessaloniki, 1990), 9–27), the same author avers that Mauropous died after 1092. He even writes, ‘It is not impossible that Ioannes Mauropous should have lived so long’—but in 1092 Mauropous would have been over a hundred years old!

and must therefore have personally witnessed the events of the last twenty years of Basil's reign, he did not write on commission for the emperor or other high-ranking members of the court. His first 'official' poem dates from the reign of Michael IV.⁸ Mauropous will doubtless have composed some of his poems before the year 1025 when he was already in his thirties; but these poems do not fall into the category of court poetry.⁹

In poetry written before and after the year 1000, Basil II is the big absentee.¹⁰ He is only mentioned once, in a poem written far away from Constantinople. In this poem,¹¹ a paraenetic alphabet in political verse, Theodosios of Dyrrachion (*floruit* ca. 1000) provides the following piece of advice: βασιλῆιος δὲ νοῦς ἐστὶν τῶν παθῶν ἀντοκράτωρ, 'imperial is the mind that rules over passions'. This is, of course, an oblique reference to the reigning emperor, Basil II; but since the poem directly addresses the congregation of faithful at Dyrrachion,¹² it is a local product that has no immediate bearing on the sentiments of court circles around the year 1000. In a poem written by John Geometres, we read that the Bulgarians, instead of paying tribute to the emperor, dare to wear the imperial regalia—which refers to the coronation of Samuel as Tsar in 996–997.¹³ In lines 4–6, the poet warns the Bulgarians that '[...] shall change your raiment, bring your necks under the yoke, chain up your feet in shackles, and whip your backs and bellies over and over again'.

⁸ *Ioannis Euchaitorum metropolitae quae in codice Vaticano graeco 676 supersunt*, ed. P. de Lagarde (Göttingen, 1882; repr. Amsterdam, 1979), 12, no. 26.

⁹ In letter no. 25, Leo of Synada (*The Correspondence of Leo Metropolitan of Synada and Syncellus*, ed. M.P. Vinson [Washington, DC, 1985], 40–41 and 112) addresses a certain provincial judge called Mitylenaios. If this is the poet Christopher Mitylenaios (as some scholars believe), it would mean that Chr. Mityl. was not born ca. 1000–1010, but at least ten or twenty years earlier. If so, he would be one of the poets who did not write for Basil II. However, the addressee of Leo's letter may have been a relative of the poet, perhaps his father or one of his uncles.

¹⁰ It is true that Psellos praises Basil II in poem no. 26, but this poem was written at least forty years after the death of the emperor: see *Michael Psellus. Poemata*, ed. L. Westerink (Stuttgart-Leipzig, 1992), 294.

¹¹ Ed. W. Hörandner, "Poetic forms in the Tenth Century", in *Κωνσταντίνος Ζ' ὁ Πορφυρογέννητος καὶ ἡ ἐποχὴ του. Β' Διεθνῆς Βυζαντινολογικὴ Συνάντηση* (Athens, 1989), 141–5.

¹² See M.D. Lauxtermann, *The Spring of Rhythm* (Vienna, 1999), 37–8.

¹³ "Appendix ad excerpta poetica: codex 352 suppl.", in *Anecdota Graeca e Codd. Manuscriptis Bibliothecae Regiae Parisiensis*, ed. J.A. Cramer (Oxford, 1841, repr. Hildesheim, 1967), IV, 282.31–283.8. See M.D. Lauxtermann, "John Geometres—Poet and Soldier", *Byzantion* 68 (1998), 373.

Unfortunately, the lacuna in the text hides the name of the person thought to take revenge and punish the Bulgarians for their daring insolence.¹⁴ It is reasonable to assume that the avenger who reportedly shall put things right is none other than the formidable Basil II, later to be known as ‘Bulgar-slayer’ (Βουλγαροκτόνος). In another poem, John Geometres beseeches St Theodore the Recruit to help him: ‘Martyr, may you save me from the wicked pharaoh, who has made me unhappy in the end and put me in the limbo of eld’. The wicked pharaoh is Basil II, who dismissed the poet from active service in the military in 985–986 because he belonged to the faction of Basil the Nothos, the powerful *parakoimomenos* in command of the imperial court between 976 and 985.¹⁵ In many other poems Geometres tries to prove that he deserves a second chance and that the Byzantine Empire cannot do without such experienced and literate generals as himself. There can be but little doubt that the addressee of these desperate pleas is the emperor, Basil II, who can reinstate Geometres in his former position if he wants to. However, in none of these poems is Basil II explicitly mentioned. The ‘wicked pharaoh’ is not identified and his name remains a blank—a lacuna in the text.

Why is Basil II conspicuous by his dazzling absence in contemporary sources? This is a conundrum that needs to be addressed if we want to understand Byzantine culture around the year 1000. When Basil died, the Byzantine Empire was at its absolute height: a superpower if there ever was one. And yet, despite all the splendid military successes, the tremendously increased imperial authority and the incredible wealth accumulated in the state treasury, Basil II is apparently not deemed worthy to be celebrated in panegyrics, occasional poems and dedicatory epigrams. There is abundant literary evidence both for his predecessors and for the emperors that reigned after him. But not for Basil. Why? Why do we know more about his glorious reign from Arabic and Armenian than from Byzantine sources? Why do contemporary prosaists and poets stubbornly omit to mention the most powerful and successful emperor since the sixth century? What is the problem with Basil II?

¹⁴ As already noted in the manuscript itself: ‘one verse missing’. In line 7 a three-syllable word, indicating some sort of imperial garment, is missing. In the ms. the text of the poem starts at Cramer 282.31 (and not at 282.29, as in the edition!; the poem 282.29–30 deals with the same subject as the preceding one, ‘On the plundering Iberians’, 282.22–7).

¹⁵ Cramer, 292.16–17. See Lauxtermann, *John Geometres*, 367–71 and 373–8.

In two closely related passages in his *Chronographia*, Psellos writes that Basil, as he grew older and more experienced, removed the *λόγιοι* (men of learning) from the civil administration and surrounded himself with illiterate upstarts.¹⁶ He dates this changing of the guard to the early 990s because he sees a connection with the revolts of the Phokades and the Skleroi in 986–989; in his view Basil, because of these tragic events, no longer trusted the great aristocratic families and his regime turned into one of absolute autocracy. As I pointed out elsewhere,¹⁷ Psellos' account of the reign of Basil II is not entirely trustworthy. In fact, Basil II purged the civil administration already in 985–986 when Basil the Nothos, officially the *parakoimomenos*, but in fact fulfilling all the tasks of an emperor, was ousted from power. And the reason for this purge was, of course, that Basil II wanted to get rid of the troublesome faction of the *parakoimomenos*. When he finally took over power, after long years of frustration and idleness forced upon him, he desired to have his own men in key positions: loyal and trusted collaborators on whom he could rely in the power struggle that was going on at the time. So, as for the date of the great purge as well as for Basil's motives for sacking the old guard and appointing new civil servants, Psellos is certainly mistaken. But what about the rest of his comments, regarding the cultural life of Basil's reign? Is his historical account to be trusted or not? As Psellos was born in 1018 and, therefore, was too young to have personal recollections of the reign of Basil II, he had to rely on three possible sources of information: Byzantine chronicles, official documents in the imperial and patriarchal archives, and reports of still living eye-witnesses. Let us turn to the first source. Seeing that Skylitzes, Zonaras and other Byzantine historians have remarkably little to say about the long reign of Basil II, we can draw only one, rather sad conclusion: if there were any chronicles written before the year 1025 or shortly afterwards, they must have provided really poor information on what happened when and where. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that Psellos did not have access to reliable historical sources for the reign of Basil II. As for the official documents, there can be little doubt that Psellos did some research in Byzantine archives. For, in the second passage about the cultural life during the reign of Basil II, he writes: 'Since at that time the

¹⁶ Psellos, I, 18 (ch. XXIX) and 19 (ch. XXX).

¹⁷ See Lauxtermann, *John Geometres*, 367–71.

emperor's comments on memoranda or requests for favours were never varied, but only plain, straightforward statements (for Basil, whether speaking or writing, eschewed all elegance of composition), he used to dictate to his secretaries just as the words came to his tongue, stringing them all together, one after the another. There was no subtlety, nothing superfluous in his speech'.¹⁸ This passage clearly indicates that Psellos inspected official documents issued by Emperor Basil II and was struck by their lack of rhetorical embellishment. As for Psellos' third source of information, we can only guess about his informants. The name of Mauropous, of course, springs to mind since we know that Psellos was not only one of his intimate friends, but also one of his students.¹⁹ And as Mauropous grew up during the reign of Basil II, he must certainly have held some, perhaps biased, opinions as regards the level of education and culture around the year 1000. There will have been others, too, who were old enough to have provided young Psellos with some idea of what went on when Basil II was the reigning emperor.

Psellos' comments on Basil II are usually regarded as a straightforward criticism directed against some sort of cultural decline for which the emperor is to blame.²⁰ However, this is not what Psellos says, but what modern scholars read into the text of the *Chronographia*. What Psellos actually says, is the following:

[Basil II] paid no attention to men of learning; on the contrary, he affected utter scorn—towards the learned folk, I mean. It seems to me a wonderful thing, therefore, that while the emperor so despised literary culture, no small crop of orators and philosophers sprang up in those times. One solution of the paradox, I fancy, is this: the men of those days did not devote themselves to the study of letters for any ulterior purpose—they cultivated literature for its own sake and as an end in itself, whereas the majority nowadays do not approach the subject of education in this spirit, but consider personal profit to be the first reason for study. Perhaps I should add that though gain is the object of their zeal for literature, if they do not immediately achieve this goal, then they desist from their studies at once. Shame on them!²¹

¹⁸ Psellos, I, 19. Translation: E.R.A. Sewter, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers. The Chronographia of Michael Psellus* (Harmondsworth-Baltimore-Victoria, 1966), 45. See also Psellos' comments on the documents of Constantine VIII in shorthand, which again indicates that he must have inspected official documents: Psellos, I, 29 (ch. VI).

¹⁹ Karpozilos, *Συμβολή στη μελέτη*, 26–7.

²⁰ See, for instance, B. Crostini, "The Emperor Basil II's Cultural Life", *Byzantion* 66 (1996), 55–80.

²¹ Psellos, I, 18; trans. Sewter, 44.

This is a strange criticism coming from someone who made his way to the top by adroitly exploiting his rhetorical talents and literary genius—from someone who, as he himself admits, gained access to the emperor Constantine IX Monomachos and became his personal secretary because he knew how to use the right words at the appropriate time.²² But then again, is one of the main reasons why the *Chronographia* is such a superb text and such a delight to read, not precisely the ambiguity, tongue-in-cheek approach and irony of Psellos? Psellos does not write for people, Byzantine or modern, who are too simple-minded and too credulous to be able to read between the lines and grasp his drift.

In the passage quoted above, Psellos writes that it is amazing to see that there was no lack of orators and philosophers during the reign of Basil II, although the emperor himself affected utter scorn towards the men of learning. In other parts of the *Chronographia*, Psellos wants us to believe that the once throbbing vein of philosophy had dried out until he pumped new life into it,²³ but that is of course mere self-aggrandizement. As for the *belles lettres*, even Psellos could not deny that in a highly rhetorical society, such as Byzantium undoubtedly was, there were many orators; but he tried his best to convey the impression that he was the most gifted of them all.²⁴ Since he was still a mere child when Basil II died, there was no reason for him to obscure the fact that Byzantine culture flourished around the year 1000; but as for the cultural life after the reign of Basil II, he felt the urge to portray it as grimly as possible, so that his own contribution to rhetoric and philosophy would stand out in the brightest of colours. Therefore, whenever Psellos maintains that he rescued the literary legacy of the ancients from utter oblivion, we should take his words with a pinch of salt. Psellos certainly did not reinvent the wheel. Both philosophy and rhetoric were practised at a high level when he was still a young student; his own contribution, when he had grown up, was merely to give a new impulse to the study of these two fields.

²² See Psellos, I, 139–40 (ch. XLVI) and II, 141–2 (ch. VII). See also poem no. 16, in which young Psellos appeals to Michael IV (1034–1041) and asks him to be awarded a lucrative position in the civil service: *Psellus, Poemata*, ed. Westerink, 238.

²³ Psellos, I, 33 (ch. III), 135 (ch. XXXVII), and 138 (ch. XLIII).

²⁴ See, for instance, *ibid.*, I, 134–5 (ch. XXXVI) and 137 (ch. XLI).

Psellos doubtless had access to more texts than we do nowadays: not only documents and charters issued by Basil II, which, he tells us, were written in a simple and unaffected style, but also various literary writings of contemporaries, which were still available to him, but unfortunately have not come down to us—‘the crop of orators and philosophers’, which, as he informs us, was ‘not small’. And indeed, to judge from the little that has been preserved, there is no reason to believe that the reign of Basil II by any means constituted a break with the past or, for that matter, with the subsequent period of the eleventh century. True enough, things changed in the course of time,²⁵ but it was a gradually evolving process of continuity—not a sudden rupture. The year 1000 sounds like an ominous date of millenarian dimensions to us, but in the Byzantine calendar, which counted from the creation of the world, our 1000 A.D. was their 6508 A.M. For the Byzantines, the year 1000 was no different from the year 1001 or the year 999; it was business as usual. Well, almost as usual. What we observe around the year 1000, is a temporary dip in the production of court poetry, histories, and encomiastic speeches, such as were written both before and after the reign of Basil II. Although numerous scholars, poets and intellectuals witnessed the splendid military feats of the emperor, no one seems to have felt the urge to compose a panegyric celebrating Basil II.

This is what Psellos calls the ἀπορία—the paradox of Basil II’s reign. I think that Psellos’ account of the cultural life during Basil II’s reign is accurate, not only because there was no reason for him to lie, but also because it entirely concords with the facts. There was no cultural decline around the year 1000 (as some modern scholars believe); but intellectuals were not welcome at the court of Basil II. Encomiasts there were enough, but the emperor did not encourage them to write laudatory texts. Basil II could have listened to numerous panegyrics celebrating his victories, but apparently he did not want to. Byzantine culture itself did not change around the year 1000. But what did alter was the attitude of the reigning emperor. Culture did not decline, but it was no longer sponsored by the emperor. It was removed from power. Its voice was no longer heard. The question is why. Why does Basil II, in sharp contrast to emperors reign-

²⁵ See A.P. Kazhdan and A. Wharton Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California, 1985). See also P. Lemerle, *Cinq études sur le XI^e siècle byzantin* (Paris, 1977), 251–312.

ing before and after him, play deaf to the court orators? Why does he refuse to listen to their panegyrics glorifying his military successes and brilliant policies? What is wrong with the emperor Basil II?

Let us look at Byzantine poetry written around the year 1000. What do we have? A lot of Geometres, in the first place: not only poems and epigrams written when he was still the poet laureate at court, but also numerous verses dating from the years after 985–986, when Geometres had fallen into disfavour with the emperor, Basil II. During the civil war (986–989) and its aftermath (banditry, 989–990), the poet presents a gloomy picture of the state of affairs: Bulgarian aggression, revolts of the aristocratic families as well as turmoil in Constantinople and elsewhere in the empire, which led to fratricide, senseless bloodshed, plunderings, social disorder, poverty and famine—things that did not please God Almighty at all, as He made abundantly clear by means of ominous portents and earthquakes.²⁶ It is not clear whether the many poems Geometres wrote to defend himself against false accusations and to present himself as favourably as possible to the emperor, were composed during the tumultuous years of the civil war or afterwards.²⁷ But it does not really matter. Vastly more important is the fact that Geometres was not allowed to re-enter the service of the emperor. He died around the year 1000, a monk in the Kyros monastery, forgotten by most members of the court and frowned upon by the emperor himself. After 985–986 Geometres stopped being a court poet, and his grumbling comments directed against the military and the civil administration were not listened to. Then we have John of Melitene, a partisan of the Phokas family. Of his various poems, only one can be dated: a fictitious epitaph to Nikephoros Phokas, which is in fact a piece of propaganda directed against Basil II's unpopular decision to appeal to the Rus' for help in 988; it invokes the spirit of the dead emperor to rise from the grave and it indirectly canvasses support for his nephew, Bardas Phokas.²⁸ As John of Melitene belonged to a faction clearly opposed to the autocratic policies of Basil II, it is not surprising that he was not invited to compose court poetry in

²⁶ See Lauxtermann, *John Geometres*, 367–8.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 368–9, 371–2.

²⁸ See A. Poppe, "The Political Background to the Baptism of Rus'. Byzantine-Russian Relations between 986 and 989", *DOP* 30 (1976), 195–224, at 211–24; see also Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry from Pisides to Geometres* (forthcoming), Appendix III.

honour of the emperor whom he so much despised. In short: John Geometres would have loved to be able to compose panegyrics in honour of the emperor responsible for his downfall, but was never given the chance; John of Melitene, on the contrary, hated the Macedonian clan so much that it was out of the question that he would write encomiastic texts on behalf of the reigning emperor. These two poets do not belong to the court of Basil II.

Symeon the New Theologian (949–1022) is the only poet we know to have composed poems throughout the long reign of Basil II. His earliest poems probably date from the 980s and 990s when he was abbot of the monastery of Mamas; most of his poems, however, appear to have been written after his deposition and subsequent exile.²⁹ None of the 58 *Hymns* (consisting of no less than 10,700 verses in total) contain any reference to historical events, except for no. 21, a poetic epistle in which he responds to a question posed to him by Stephen the Synkellos, concerning his views on the precise trinitarian relation between God the Father and the Son. The poem dates from the year 1003, when Symeon was brought to trial on a charge of heterodoxy lodged against him by the patriarch's *synkellos*—a lawsuit he lost and that led to his deposition in 1005. The issue at stake was the definition of authority: whereas the synod clung to the traditional view that the church as an institution created by God exercised absolute jurisdiction in matters of religion, Symeon maintained that saints and mystics, too, had the right to theologize because they, through the grace of the Holy Spirit descending upon them, had been shown the divine light.³⁰ Symeon's highly individualistic claims to a sort of doctrinal independence and religious autonomy were subversive, not only because they undermined the patriarchal authority, but also because they ran counter to Basil II's political measures against the great aristocratic families, by which the emperor hoped both to curb the centrifugal tendencies within the state and to monopolize power all for himself. Symeon was not a friend of Basil, and especially not of Theophano, the emperor's mother. As McGuckin recently pointed out, the three religious crises Symeon

²⁹ See *Syméon le Nouveau Théologien. Hymnes*, ed. J. Koder, SC 156, (Paris, 1969), 74–7.

³⁰ See J.A. McGuckin, "Symeon the New Theologian (d. 1022) and Byzantine Monasticism", in A. Bryer and M. Cunningham (eds.), *Mount Athos and Byzantine Monasticism* (Aldershot, 1996), 17–35, at 29–30.

suffered when he was still a layman, took place at moments of great political turmoil when there was a chance that Theophano and her clan would take over power: 963, 969 and 976. According to McGuckin's interpretation, the reason why Symeon considered taking refuge in a monastery in these dangerous times, was the precarious position he was in, seeing that he belonged to one of those powerful and landowning families that were constantly at odds with the Macedonian dynasty.³¹ It is not surprising, therefore, that Symeon the New Theologian in his 58 *Hymns* does not mention Basil II, does not comment on the imperial institution and does not compare the heavenly court to the one down on earth. Silence speaks loud and clearly here. The emperor is ignored out of spite. Symeon refused to pay homage to the person responsible for so much harm done to the illustrious aristocratic families, such as the one he himself was a member of. Besides, given the emperor's spiteful character and the lack of justice he showed when Symeon was convicted without compelling evidence, it is also very much the question whether Basil II desired to hear any compliments from the mouth of a dissident. The hatred was in all likelihood mutual.

The emperor, however, counted some intellectuals among his friends: John Sikeliotēs, a rhetorician and court orator [who, reportedly, wrote some nasty things about poor John Geometres];³² Leo of Synada, an ambassador to the papacy and author of many highly interesting letters; and Nikephoros Ouranos, one of Basil's most trusted generals, author of a military treatise, epistolographer and poet. In the years of Basil the Nothos' regency (976–985), Nikephoros Ouranos sided with the faction of Basil II; he was sent twice on a secret mission to the Buyids to bring back the rebel Bardas Skleros, in 980 and 984; he was held captive at Baghdad between 984 and 987; his career between 987 and 996 is unknown; in 996–999 he was commander-in-chief of the troops in the west; and in 999 he became the military governor of Antioch, a function he held at least

³¹ See McGuckin, *Symeon the New Theologian*, 18–24. It should be noted, however, that the social status of Symeon and his family was linked to service in the corps of Palace eunuchs, rather than to military command and the ownership of vast estates: see Cheynet, *Pouvoir*, 122–3; A.P. Kazhdan and S. Ronchey, *L'aristocrazia bizantina dal principio dell'XI alla fine del XII secolo* (Palermo, 1997), s.v. Galaton; P. Magdalino, "Paphlagonians in Byzantine High Society", in S. Lampakis (ed.), *Byzantine Asia Minor* (Athens, 1998), 141–50 at 144–5.

³² *Michael Psellus. Theologica*, I, ed. P. Gautier (Leipzig, 1989) no. 47, lines 80–105.

until 1006.³³ He is the author of three poems only: a catanyctic alphabet, a monody to Symeon Metaphrastes and a short epitaph to a young philosopher.³⁴ Although it cannot be excluded that these three poems form only a small part of the poetic output of Ouranos, the fact remains that the poet nowhere alludes to the emperor whom he so faithfully served. The same holds true for Symeon Metaphrastes (ca. 930–1000).³⁵ As Nikephoros Ouranos wrote a monody in his honour and as his catanyctic alphabet clearly imitates the alphabet of the Metaphrast, it is reasonable to assume that Symeon and Ouranos were good friends—which, in its turn, suggests that Symeon the Metaphrast, like Nikephoros Ouranos, belonged to the faction of Basil II in the years after 976. None of the poems of Symeon Metaphrastes, however, refers to the emperor.³⁶ Thus we see to our surprise that even intellectuals who were on good terms with Basil II apparently did not write panegyrics or other occasional poems in honour of their emperor. Whereas Geometres, John of Melitene and Symeon the New Theologian had good reasons for not writing for the emperor, this was not apparently the case with Nikephoros Ouranos and Symeon Metaphrastes. These two authors could very well have lavishly praised the emperor in neatly composed poems; but for one reason or another, they did not.

Basil II is named in a number of run-of-the-mill verse inscriptions on city walls, ramparts and fortresses; as is only to be expected for texts written on works of fortification, these verse inscriptions emphasize the military aspect to the reign of Basil II.³⁷ The emperor is also praised in two luxuriously illuminated manuscripts he had com-

³³ On the life of Nikephoros Ouranos, see J. Darrouzès, *Épistoliers byzantins du X^e siècle* (Paris, 1960), 44–8, and P.A. Blaum, *The Days of the Warlords. A History of the Byzantine Empire A.D. 969–991* (Lanham, MD, 1994), 60–69.

³⁴ Alphabet: ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, “Βυζαντινὰ Ἀνάλεκτα”, *BZ* 8 (1899), 68–70; monody and epitaph, ed. S.G. Mercati, “Versi di Niceforo Uranos in morte di Simeona Metafraste”, *AB* 68 (1950) 126–34 (repr. in *Collectanea Byzantina* [Bari, 1970], I, 565–73).

³⁵ On the life of Symeon the Metaphrast, see I. Ševčenko, “Poems on the Deaths of Leo VI and Constantine VII in the Madrid Manuscript of Skylitzes”, *DOP* 23–24 (1969–70), 187–228, at 216–20; N. Oikonomides, “Two Seals of Symeon Metaphrastes”, *DOP* 27 (1972), 322–6, and Christian Høgel in this volume.

³⁶ For the poems of the Metaphrast, see Lauxtermann, *The Spring of Rhythm*, 33, n. 53.

³⁷ See Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry from Pisides to Geometres* (forthcoming), Appendix VIII.

missioned: the famous Venice Psalter and the so-called Menologion of Basil II [in fact, not a *menologion*, but a version of the *Synaxarion of Constantinople*].³⁸ The dedicatory epigram of the Psalter describes the miniature on the next page, which shows Basil II holding a lance and receiving his crown from the two archangels, with the figure of Christ appearing from heaven, military saints all around as emblems of power, and a group of captive enemies kneeling at the emperor's feet.³⁹ The dedicatory epigram of the Menologion, too, celebrates the piety and military stance of the glorious emperor, who is as powerful here on earth as the Almighty God is up above.⁴⁰ In lines 9–12 we read: 'Below, Basil, the one who mirrors Him in his character, ruler of the whole earth, Sun of the purple, reared in purple robes, excelling both in victories and in learning, . . .'.⁴¹ The last verse comes as quite a surprise: 'excelling . . . in learning' (κράτιστος [. . .] λόγοις). Basil II excelled in learning? No, of course, he did not, but a Byzantine ruler, even if he was as hostile to the men of letters as Basil was, perforce had to be praised for his intellectual qualities. The epitaph inscribed on Basil II's tomb in the church of St. John in the suburb of Hebdomon, once again, emphasizes the military feats of the great emperor: see, for instance, lines 5–14:

Here I rest, on the seventh day [a reference to the Hebdomon], from the numerous toils I bore and endured on the battle-field, for from the very day that the Lord of the Heavens called upon me to become the great ruler and the emperor of the world, nobody ever saw my lance resting at peace. I stayed alert throughout my life and protected the children of the New Rome, valiantly struggling both in the west and the outer regions of the east, and erecting myriads of trophies in all parts of the world.⁴²

The verse inscriptions, the captions in the Psalter and the Menologion, and the epitaph inscribed on Basil's tomb portray the emperor

³⁸ For the Psalter (Marc. gr. Z 17), see A. Cutler, *Imagery and Ideology in Byzantine Art* (London, 1992), no. III; for the Menologion (Vat. gr. 1613), see I. Ševčenko, *Ideology, Letters and Culture in the Byzantine World* (London, 1982), no. XI.

³⁹ Ed. Ševčenko, *Ideology, Letters and Culture*, 272, n. 92.

⁴⁰ *Syn CP*, xxv–xxvi.

⁴¹ Translation: Ševčenko, *Ideology, Letters and Culture*, 272.

⁴² Ed. S.G. Mercati, "Sull' epitafio di Basilio il Bulgaroctonos", *Bessarione* 25 (1921), 137–42 and 26 (1922) 220–2 (repr. in *Collectanea Byzantina* [Bari, 1970], II, 226–31 and 232–4); and C. Asdracha, "Inscriptions byzantines de la Thrace orientale et de l'île d'Imbros (XI^e–XV^e siècles)", *Ἀρχαιολογικὸν Δελτίον* 47–48 (1992–93), no. 102, pp. 309–16.

just as he wanted to be remembered by future generations: as a bold and courageous soldier fighting for the Byzantine empire, who was directly appointed by the Almighty God to serve as His deadly weapon against all enemies.

In the military ideology of Basil II there is no place for literature. As Psellos already observed, the reign of Basil II was marked by a strongly anti-intellectual climate; the men of letters were no longer welcome at the Byzantine court and the emperor did not feel any inclination to listen to their fine rhetoric. This was not the end of culture; on the contrary, as the same Psellos duly observed, philosophy and rhetoric flourished like never before. If we look at poetry written before and after the year 1000, there is only one word that springs to mind: continuity.⁴³ In contrast to the tenth century, the poetry of the pre-Comnenian age is definitely marked by a more refined touch of humour, a stronger sense of self-consciousness, a greater awareness of the *condition humaine*, and a sort of intellectual versatility one rarely encounters before the year 1000. However, the year 1000 certainly does not constitute a radical break with the past, for whatever seems new in Mauropous, Psellos and Christopher Mitylenaios already pre-existed, albeit *in statu nascendi*, in the poetry of Geometres. There, too, we find a combination of wit, urbanity, self-assertiveness and intellectual independence—perhaps not yet as articulate as in later poetry, but still distinctive enough to be easily recognized as the prelude to eleventh-century culture. The long, anti-intellectual reign of Basil II did not change the course of Byzantine poetry. Even if another emperor, more culturally-minded than Basil, had sat on the throne, eleventh-century poetry would not have been any different from what it turned out to be. The only thing that did change, albeit temporarily, was imperial patronage. Whereas most Byzantine emperors financially supported poets and encouraged them to write flattering encomia on their behalf, Basil II apparently did not. We can only guess at Basil's motives for 'affecting utter scorn towards the learned folk': bitter hatred against the aristocratic fam-

⁴³ See W. Hörandner, "La poésie profane au XI^e siècle et la connaissance des auteurs anciens", *TM* 6 (1976), 245–63, at 253–6, according to whom there are only two minor differences between tenth-century and eleventh-century poetry: the popularity of didactic poems after the year 1000 [but see Leo Choïrosphaktes' poems *On Thermal Springs* and *Thousand-line Theology*] and the absence of ceremonial poetry performed by the demes in the eleventh century [which is perhaps simply a matter of lacking manuscript evidence].

ilies and their followers (as Psellos assumed)? disgust at the intellectual coterie of Basil the Nothos? soldierly contempt of slick court orators? However, as it is not the task of historians to fathom the psychological depths and idiosyncrasies of people long dead, the ulterior motives of Basil II do not concern us. What we observe is that Basil II, for whatever compelling reason, banned poets and orators from his court.

Let us listen to one of Basil's victims, the poet John Geometres, who was dismissed from the military during the great purge of 985–986. In many poems he avers that he lost his position because he excelled both in σοφία (wisdom) and τόλμη (courage); if we are to believe the poet, his rivals at court maintained, out of pure spite, that military skills and rhetorical talents cannot and should not be combined.⁴⁴ In one of his poems, for instance, he writes the following: 'hence evil tongues and the wicked demon started to talk and much envy poured from their mouths, saying that I alone was an offshoot of wisdom and that I alone was a valiant champion, stoutly combining intellect with courage (. . .); this is what the modern legislators of evil decree: let the wise be meek and let the brave be hostile to wisdom'.⁴⁵ In another poem, written at the time of the civil wars (986–989), Geometres bluntly blames the emperor for all the military disasters; by dismissing erudite generals and appointing in their stead illiterate nobodies, he has provoked a crisis in the army.⁴⁶ Although the truth of the matter is that Geometres fell into disfavour with the emperor because he had supported the politically opposite faction of Basil the Nothos, it is interesting to note that he presents his conflict with Basil II as the result of an antagonism between civilized courtiers and cultural barbarians. According to John Geometres, the issue at stake is the intrinsic value of higher learning as a basic requirement to fulfill a high position in the military as well as in other departments of the imperial bureaucracy. Whereas the highest positions at court were once awarded to the most talented, nowadays the fate of the Byzantine empire lies in the hands of vulgar upstarts and generalissimos without any breeding. And see how deep we have fallen: the virtues of courage and wisdom 'bewail

⁴⁴ Ed. Cramer, 295.10, 317.8; 331.6, 336.4; 341.10, 341.15, 342.6, 348.16.

⁴⁵ Ed. Cramer, 317.32–318.6. See Lauxtermann, *John Geometres*, 369.

⁴⁶ Cramer, 342.6; see, especially, verses 342.23–32, 343.27–30, 347.20–30. See Lauxtermann, *John Geometres*, 368–9.

the imperial City and the sceptres of Rome', 'the prosperous Roman state lies in ruins', 'against all odds, the noble cities -alas!- are trampled upon by the nations', and 'the glory of yore and the general's strength are no more'.⁴⁷ This is what happens when you remove learned soldiers, such as Geometres, from the top positions that they deservedly hold, and replace them by less educated people. The grim picture sketched by Geometres is certainly exaggerated and there is no need to believe that all the generals appointed by Basil II were absolute nitwits (see, for instance, the brilliant military career of Nikephoros Ouranos). The fact remains, however, that both Geometres and Psellos portray the reign of Basil II as essentially anti-intellectual. If the only two Byzantine sources we have for the cultural life of Basil II's reign, independently from each other, basically report the same thing, there must be some truth to it. Furthermore, given the remarkable lack of panegyrics and other texts celebrating the emperor,⁴⁸ there is absolutely no reason why we should not trust Geometres and Psellos when they say that Basil II showed 'utter scorn towards the learned folk'. True enough, in the entourage of Basil II we find a few intellectuals, such as Leo of Synada and Nikephoros Ouranos, but as the saying goes, 'one swallow does not make a summer' (or in Byzantine Greek: μία χελιδὼν ἔαρ οὐ κτίζει). Two or three or four swallows do not either. One would expect to hear a lot of chirruping during the long, long summer of Basil's reign; but the swallows keep their beaks shut, and what we hear is total silence.

In Vat. gr. 341, a Psalter copied in the year 1021, we find a poem by a certain Anthimos, *chartophylax* of the Great Church, in which he proclaims that the world, as we know it, is drawing to its end.⁴⁹ The poem in which he predicts the end of the world is badly

⁴⁷ Cramer, 342.27–32.

⁴⁸ There are only two prose panegyrics in honour of Basil II: an encomium by Leo the Deacon (I. Sykouris, "Λέοντος τοῦ Διακόνου ἀνέκδοτον ἐγκώμιον εἰς Βασίλειον τὸν Β'", *EEBS* 10 [1933], 425–34), and a lost encomium by John Sikeliotēs (see *Rhetores Graeci*, ed. C. Walz (Stuttgart-Tübingen, 1834), VI, 447.24–26). The former dates from c. 980 (see N.M. Panagiotakis, *Λέων ὁ Διάκονος* [Athens, 1965], 9–10); that is, from the period of Basil the Nothos' regency, when Basil II had not yet taken over power. The latter no longer exists, but since John Sikeliotēs was a contemporary of John Geometres (see above, n. 32), it is reasonable to assume that he delivered his speech in the early part of Basil's reign. Thus it cannot be excluded that Sikeliotēs, like Leo the Deacon, praised Basil II in the years between 976 and 985, when Basil was only officially the emperor.

⁴⁹ Ed. G. Mercati, "Anthimi de proximo saeculi fine", in *Opere Minori*, II (Rome, 1937), 298–304. The poem is also found in Par. gr. 1111 (11th c.) and Athous

written, but of course, if you know that the end is nigh, then rhetoric, metre and style do not matter any longer. Whereas most eschatological texts in the Middle Ages, just as in modern times, are rather vague and leave some margins for further speculation, Anthimos provides a precise date for doomsday: 18 April 1025, when Easter will be celebrated for the very last time, exactly one thousand years after the Resurrection of Christ. Although Anthimos' apocalyptic poem probably dates from the tenth century (perhaps from c. 959, as Magdalino suggests),⁵⁰ it is interesting to note that the scribe of the Psalter copied the poem only four years before the final countdown—which obviously indicates that he was under the impression that he would witness the end of all time. Needless to say, there was apparently something wrong with Anthimos' skilful calculations and doomsday did not take place on the date he had predicted with such an accuracy that the scribe of Vat. gr. 341 felt it had to be the moment to end all moments. The feast of Easter in the year 1025 was like any other Easter. And so was the Easter of 1026, except for one minor technicality: Basil II, who had reigned for so many years, by then had died.

Anthimos' gloomy prediction of 'apocalypse now' was copied in Vat. gr. 341 at the very same time that Byzantium had not only regained its former glory, but had also become a superpower in the Mediterranean, the Balkans and the Near East. And yet, the scribe had no doubts that the Byzantine empire was doomed to end in just a few years. It is the paradox of Basil II's reign in a nutshell. Despite all his glorious feats and splendid accomplishments, Byzantine poets paradoxically refrain from any positive comments on his reign. But who is to blame, the poets or Basil II? Basil himself, I would say. For, apart from a few obstinate opponents, such as John of Melitene and Symeon the New Theologian, most Byzantine poets would have loved to write panegyrics on behalf of the reigning emperor, but

Karakallou 14 (12th c.); in the latter ms. it bears the heading: ἀπόδειξις Ἀνθίμου χαρτοφύλακος τῆς μεγάλης ἐκκλησίας τοῦ συγγραψαμένου τοὺς κύκλους περὶ τῆς συντελείας: see G. Podskalsky, *Byzantinische Reicheschatologie* (Munich, 1972), 97, n. 574.

⁵⁰ Vat. gr. 341, the oldest manuscript, certainly does not constitute the archetype of the text tradition, seeing that it omits one or more lines between 8 and 9 and offers readings that are blatantly incorrect. In Par. gr. 1111 (11th c.) we read that the poem 'was found in an old Psalter'; but of course, we do not know *how* old this exemplar may have been. For the 959 date, see Paul Magdalino's paper in this volume.

they were not given the chance to do so because Basil II, for whatever motive known only to him, did not like to listen to their lofty words and sublime iambs. The poets did not keep silent as a sign of protest or because they feared that the end of the world was nigh, but because the emperor apparently could do without their compliments and fine rhetoric. In the end, the utter silence of Byzantine poetry, as regards the complex figure of Basil II, tells more about the emperor than it does about the poets.

HAGIOGRAPHY UNDER THE MACEDONIANS: THE TWO RECENSIONS OF THE METAPHRASTIC MENOLOGION

Christian Høgel

As the studies of Lennart Rydén have shown, at least two saints' lives written in the second half of the tenth century in Byzantium include the idea of an approaching end.¹ Thus also Byzantine hagiography can be shown to have reflected on the year 1000 as a possible historical, even cosmic turning-point. But this idea of including apocalyptic calculations in what purport to be ordinary saints' lives is just one of several literary experiments that emerge within hagiography in the centuries either side of the year 1000. This was the time when Byzantine hagiography became literature. After a new resurgence in the ninth century of refined high-style hagiography, an experimental mood entered the composition of some hagiographical works that would now include fictional devices, such as narrative frames in which another narrator for the main story was introduced,² or fictitious saints.³ By the year 1000 hagiography had in Byzantium adopted many traits of a popular literature. It was a literature endowed with an enormous audience. The thousands of hagiographical manuscripts that we have today bear witness to this,⁴ and as most of

¹ See e.g. L. Rydén, "The Life of St. Basil the Younger and the Date of St. Andreas Salos", in C. Mango and O. Pritsak (eds.), *Okeanos. Essays presented to I. Ševčenko on his Sixtieth Birthday by his Colleagues and Students* (Cambridge MA., 1983) [= *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 7], with bibliography.

² This is the case in the Life of Theoktiste (BHG 1723–24). See the discussion in O. Karsay, "Der Jäger von Euböa", *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungarica* 23 (1975), 9–14, and the criticism in A.P. Kazhdan, "Hagiographical notes (9–12)," *BZ* 78 (1985), 49–55, n. 9.

³ See e.g. L. Rydén, *The Life of St Andrew the Fool*, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia, 4, 1–2 (Uppsala, 1995), I, 34 and J.O. Rosenqvist, *The Life of St Irene Abbess of Chrysobalanton*, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia 1 (Uppsala, 1986), xxiii–ix.

⁴ The best way to get a true impression of the nature of Byzantine hagiography is by browsing through the lists in A. Ehrhard, *Überlieferung und Bestand der hagiographischen und homiletischen Literatur der griechischen Kirche*, 3 vols., TU 50–52 (Leipzig & Berlin, 1936–52), II (henceforth Ehrhard).

these are liturgical manuscripts and therefore meant to be read in churches and monasteries, the hagiographical texts would even have reached many illiterate people. Already, prolific authors such as Ignatios the Deacon and Niketas the Paphlagonian seem to have made a career, if not a living, out of writing hagiography.⁵

On the outside, however, the hagiographical literature was still dominated by a concern for the past.⁶ Though new texts, sometimes on near-contemporary saints, were composed, by far the majority of texts read from the liturgical manuscripts were old texts, written in what we call Late Antiquity. Most of these texts were simple, of an unknown author, and with no literary pretensions.⁷ Thus, hagiography presented to the middle Byzantine audience simple stories thoroughly belonging to the past, but, as new texts would show, these could, if the presentation carried conviction, be retold in a present setting. This was the backdrop for the new literature, which would put the monotony of the old texts to its own use.⁸

These new developments led, from the tenth century onwards, to an increasing discrepancy within the world of Byzantine hagiography. On the one hand the large group of old texts was as popular as ever, and due to better economy and through the new and swifter minuscule script becoming more and more accessible.⁹ On the other hand, an increasing number of well-educated persons, who enjoyed and in some cases even produced more literary hagiographical texts, became weary of hearing the old stories repeated in their humble and unpretentious tone. Psellos, in the eleventh century, says that

⁵ On Ignatios the Deacon, see S. Efthymiadis, *The Life of the Patriarch Tarasios by Ignatios the Deacon (BHG 1698)*, Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Monographs 4 (Aldershot, 1998), and on Niketas the Paphlagonian see the *ODB*.

⁶ On the importance of the past in Byzantine hagiography, see C. Rapp, "Byzantine Hagiographers as Antiquarians, Seventh to Tenth Centuries", in S. Efthymiadis, C. Rapp and D. Tsougarakis (eds.), *Bosphorus. Essays in Honour of Cyril Mango* [= *BF* 21] (Amsterdam, 1995), 31–44, who in my view, however, overemphasizes the encyclopaedic nature of the hagiographical liturgical collections.

⁷ To get an idea of the amount of anonymous texts, see the listings in Ehrhard and in the *BHG*.

⁸ See the detailed readings of the Life of Basil the Younger and the Life of Andrew the Fool in P. Magdalino, "'What we heard in the Lives of the Saints we have seen with our own eyes': the holy man as literary text in tenth-century Constantinople", in J. Howard-Johnston and P.A. Hayward (eds.), *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1999), 83–112.

⁹ See C. Mango, "The Availability of Books in the Byzantine Empire, A.D. 750–850", in *Byzantine Books and Bookmen*, Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium 1971 (Washington, DC, 1975), 29–45.

hagiographical texts had even become the target of derision.¹⁰ The old literature no longer just functioned as a backdrop, but was becoming a draw-back for the new ambitions.

But there were ways of remedying this discrepancy between popular text and literary tastes. It had long been a custom for some to produce a new text on the basis of the old when commemorating a saint. Instead of reading the old life, one could, if one had the right educational background, produce an *enkomion*, a speech of praise, in the well-educated manner prescribed by the rhetoricians.¹¹ The old story would then be presented in a form that was at least stylistically acceptable. Some of these speeches gradually found their way into the liturgical collections, but rough counting will show that the old version, which was perhaps known to tell the whole story, would still in most cases be preferred when a new copy of a collection was to be produced.¹² Still, in the course of time, several versions of many hagiographical texts began circulating, making it necessary, and yet at the same time difficult, to distinguish between old text, in a later terminology called a *keímenon* which means simply a text,¹³ and refined versions, for which the technical term would be *metaphrasis*, or 'rewriting'.¹⁴ In the context of liturgical collections, in which the majority of hagiographical texts are found, this designation would soon include the idea of substitution, for metaphrasis acquired the meaning of 'new, improved version' replacing the old text expected in its place in the liturgical sequence.¹⁵ In fact, it was in the context of hagiographical collections that the practice of metaphrasis was to acquire its greatest importance.

¹⁰ In his praise of Symeon Metaphrastes, see E. Kurtz and F. Drexler, *Michaelis Pselli Scripta Minora* (Milan, 1936), 99–100; E.A. Fisher, *Michaelis Pselli Orationes Hagiographicae* (Stuttgart & Leipzig, 1994), 277–8.

¹¹ See H. Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner*, Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft, 2 vols. (Munich, 1978), I, 120ff.

¹² I base myself on Ehrhard's 'old menologia', see Ehrhard, I, 326–701.

¹³ As described by Eprem, see P.K. Kekelidze, "Simeon Metafrast po gruzinskim istochnikam", *Trudy Kievskoi Dychobnoi Akademii* 2 (1910), 172–91, 220.

¹⁴ On the possible first occurrence of the term with this meaning, see S. Efthymiadis, "John of Sardis and the Metaphrasis of the Passio of St. Nikephoros the Martyr", *RStB* n.s. 28 (1991), 23–44, 28ff.

¹⁵ On the workings of text collections, see P.C. Miller, "Strategies of Representation in Collective Biography. Constructing the Subject as Holy", in T. Hägg and P. Rousseau (eds.), *Biography and Panegyrics in Late Antiquity*, The Transformation of the Classical Heritage 31 (Berkeley, 2000), 209–54.

Liturgical hagiographical collections—collections containing hagiographical texts in their liturgical order—had appeared in Byzantium probably in the seventh or eighth century, after the Constantinopolitan church calendar had been established in full.¹⁶ There were from the outset several types of collections, with a varying amount of texts that would suit different liturgical ambitions. These collections were in the beginning probably produced and copied in some of the major monasteries,¹⁷ and, except for the eradication of heretical collections or texts,¹⁸ no standardization had taken place as in the case of the more central liturgical books. What then comes as a new development concerning these liturgical collections in the tenth century is that they now start being produced, not by the highest church authorities as one might have suspected, but by the emperors. The first example comes in the mid-tenth century when the emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus had his secretary, whose name was probably Euaristos, compose the collection known as the Synaxarion, a collection of abridged saints' lives.¹⁹ This collection, which was meant for the service in the Hagia Sophia, was soon copied, in some cases translated, and used in religious institutions all over the orthodox world.²⁰ The synaxarion was only one of several hagiographical enterprises that Constantine Porphyrogenitus commissioned and participated in, but in the long run it was certainly the most successful. His grandson Basil II had a luxurious Synaxarion, the so-called Menologion of Basil II, made for himself, with 430 miniatures of saints on a golden background.²¹

But soon after the production of the Synaxarion, the most important and most copied hagiographical collection in the Byzantine world appeared, again under imperial commission, namely the Metaphrastic menologion. This collection, of which we today have roughly 700 manuscripts and another 200 fragments,²² was composed by Symeon

¹⁶ Ehrhard, I, 28–33.

¹⁷ The earliest evidence is monastic: see Ehrhard, I, 19ff.

¹⁸ See canon 63 in G. Nedungatt and M. Featherstone, *The Council of Trullo Revisited*, Kanonika 6 (Rome, 1995).

¹⁹ See C.M. Saugey, *Premières recherches sur l'origine et les caractéristiques des synaxaires melkites (XI^e–XVII^e siècles)*, SubsHag 45 (Brussels, 1969), 32–3, 41.

²⁰ Ibid., passim.

²¹ See the *ODB* under 'Menologion of Basil II'.

²² A rough counting of the mss listed in Ehrhard, II, 318–659 leads to such figures.

Metaphrastes (= the 'rewriter') in the last decades of the tenth century. Symeon Metaphrastes' official post, at the time of production, was *logothetes tou dromou*, a very high post in the imperial system,²³ and Symeon's work was from 982 according to the well-informed Georgian translator, Eprem Mtsire, officially done at the behest of the emperor, who at this point was Basil II.²⁴ Menologia—collections that would give hagiographical texts on fixed dates in their full length, ordered chronologically according to the church year—had existed in Byzantium at least since the ninth century. What Symeon did was, however, a little different from what other producers of menologia did. Symeon not only collected hagiographical texts on saints and martyrs, he also, in most cases, thoroughly edited them. Instead of re-using an existing, and in most cases old, version of the texts, which as I described before had become an embarrassment to many, he changed the wording of just about all texts, taking utmost care not to change the meaning or the narrative structure of the old texts,²⁵ though he would now and then insert additional information when this could be gathered from other sources.²⁶ Only a few texts, that were already satisfactory in style, were left unchanged; another handful of texts was composed by Symeon himself on the basis of what he deemed unsatisfactory accounts.²⁷ So, what came out of this were for all practical purposes the old stories now told in the style and with the sentence structure that Symeon and rhetorically educated persons of his time considered appropriate to high themes. Symeon had taken the practice of *metaphrasis* to its logical extreme by rewriting an entire collection. Thus appeared what to many was the remedy to bridge the gap between popular texts and new literary demands, at least if we can believe Psellos, who insists that the

²³ See D.A. Miller, "The Logothete of the Drome in the Middle Byzantine Period", *Byzantion*, 36 (1966), 438–70 and R. Guiland, "Les logothètes. Études sur l'histoire administrative de l'Empire byzantin", *REB* 29 (1971), 5–115.

²⁴ For the text of Eprem, see Kekelidze, *op. cit.* For this and other detailed information on the Metaphrastic Menologion, see the *ODB* and my *Symeon Metaphrastes. Rewriting and Canonization*, forthcoming.

²⁵ This care is explicitly mentioned by both Eprem (Kekelidze, *op. cit.*, 220) and Psellos, ed. Kurtz-Drexler, 103, lines 26ff.; ed. Fisher, 282, lines 283ff.

²⁶ The use of secondary sources was first discussed in full by W. Lackner, "Zu Editions-geschichte, Textgestalt und Quellen der Passio S. Polyeucti des Symeon Metaphrastes", in W. Hörandner et al. (eds.), *Byzantios. Festschrift für Herbert Hunger* (Vienna, 1984); see also my *Symeon Metaphrastes* (see n. 24).

²⁷ See Ehrhard, II, 639–42

Metaphrastic texts appealed to both the learned reader and the common listener.²⁸

Psellos may of course be asserting what he wished to come true, so in order better to understand the success of the Metaphrastic Menologion, it is worth looking more closely into the details of how it was produced, for whom, and through which channels of book production. Surprisingly much of this can, in fact, be gathered from our sources. So first, how does one produce thoroughly edited versions of about 120 texts ranging from three to more than a hundred pages each? Luckily we have an account of how the work was done.²⁹ The old texts were read aloud, probably by a secretary, sentence by sentence, or, occasionally, in longer passages. After each bit of text, Symeon would on the spot dictate the new text to stenographers who would take it down in shorthand, and the stenographic text would then subsequently be copied into ordinary script. This procedure obviously requires a team of well-trained assistants, such as the imperial chancery offered. We may imagine the busy logothete doing some rephrasing now and then, before rushing off to his other duties. Maybe he only did the final check and left the rest to trusted employees. In any case, the outcome has not been to the liking of modern scholars and readers, and the uninventive rhetorical revision of the old texts has offered no attractions for modern historians. In fact, Symeon has the doubtful honour of being probably the most defamed Byzantine writer in modern times.³⁰ In Byzantium, however, the reaction was, at least in many quarters, the exact opposite. Symeon's texts became immensely popular. I mentioned the many surviving manuscripts, and not more than half a century after his death Symeon himself rose to the status of sainthood.³¹

Now, Symeon's success could be explained by referring to the fact that he was working under imperial commission, but certain details in his biography and in our manuscript evidence indicate that Symeon's

²⁸ Ed. Kurtz-Drexler, 105, lines 19–27; ed. Fisher, 282.

²⁹ Ed. Kurtz-Drexler, 103, lines 2–8; ed. Fisher, 285, lines 333–41. I depend here on the analysis by Flusin and Paramelle in P. Petitmengin et al. (eds.), *Pélagie la Pénitente. Métamorphose d'une légende*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1981–4), II, 22.

³⁰ The most explicit example of such defamation comes in the first edition of the *BHG*, viii.

³¹ Both clear from the *akolouthia* of Psellos, ed. Kurtz-Drexler, 108–9, and from the later Synaxarion entry by Markos Eugenikos, see A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Μαυρογορδάτειος Βιβλιοθήκη. Ἀνέκδοτα ἑλληνικά* (Constantinople, 1884), 100–101.

success was not instant, at least not at court. According to our Georgian source, Eprem Mtsire, Symeon lost favour at court and his Menologion was ordered to be burned.³² This attempt at suppressing the text did, as we know, not succeed. But it is puzzling that of the more than two hundred eleventh-century Metaphrastic manuscripts, none can be dated with any certainty to the first quarter of the century. From this period we only know for sure of three miscellaneous manuscripts that, among other texts, incorporate a few Metaphrastic Lives.³³ This seems to confirm the evidence of Eprem who tells us that after Symeon lost the favour of Basil II his texts were only read 'in the houses', which I take to mean that they did not yet exist in official copies.³⁴ And again, according to the same source, it was only later, after the deaths of both Symeon (after 989?)³⁵ and Basil (1025), that the texts received what we could call an 'official publication'. I have argued elsewhere, on the basis of some dedicatory poems, that this 'official publication' took place under Basil's brother and successor, Constantine VIII.³⁶ In any case, the lack of early manuscripts, together with the account of Symeon's disgrace at court, could indicate that the copying of Metaphrastic texts on a larger scale took place only some time well into the eleventh century.

Now, our external sources for the early history of the Metaphrastic Menologion are disparate, uncertain and, given that Symeon Metaphrastes was a high-ranking and well-known person, of a surprisingly legendary character. We shall never know what happened with the texts between Symeon's rephrasing and our first manuscripts. But the surviving manuscripts offer us some information that can take us back into the fascinating, but desperately difficult question of where the production of these manuscripts took place and for whom; thus to the issue of how the Metaphrastic Menologion attained its enormous popularity. For knowing how immensely costly manuscripts were in Byzantium,³⁷ we may rightfully ask the simple question: who paid for all these manuscripts? As I mentioned before, the Menologion

³² See Kekelidze, *op. cit.*, 221.

³³ See Ehrhard, II, 31.

³⁴ See Kekelidze, *op. cit.*, 221.

³⁵ For this date, see my *Symeon Metaphrastes* (see n. 24).

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ See N.G. Wilson, "Books and Readers in Byzantium", in *Byzantine Books and Bookmen*, Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium 1971 (Washington, DC, 1975), 1-4.

was normally produced in a ten-volume edition. And remembering that the 900 surviving manuscripts and fragments are only a fraction of what existed once, and also remembering that actually only very few of these surviving volumes seem to fit together into original sets of ten,³⁸ it is not difficult to argue that especially in the eleventh but also in the twelfth centuries the production of Metaphrastic manuscripts went into thousands,³⁹ and the question how this enormous book production was financed becomes interesting.

Unfortunately only a handful of Metaphrastic manuscripts are inscribed with the names of the commissioners or of the original institutions for which the given manuscript was made. We are, therefore, forced to approach the issue from several angles. From the nature of the collection, the Menologion would probably best fit into a monastic context. Which other institution would have the hope of entertaining an audience just about every day with the full text of a saint's life? This being so, it is obvious to think of the larger known monastic establishments as producers and buyers of such Metaphrastic collections. Many of the Metaphrastic manuscripts now in the possession of the monastic communities on Mt Athos were probably also commissioned or produced there, just as some of our Metaphrastic manuscripts are thought to have originated in the Stoudios monastery.⁴⁰ We also know that the Evergetis monastery established in the mid-eleventh century outside Constantinople owned and used a full set of Metaphrastic texts.⁴¹ Thus, the monastic use and consequently purchase of Metaphrastic manuscripts are certain. On the other hand, we know that there were not that many monastic communities of the size and wealth of these well-known establishments, and the Metaphrastic manuscripts owned by these hardly ran into thousands. Obviously churches belonging to the higher levels of the ecclesiasti-

³⁸ Ehrhard, II, 682.

³⁹ See the lists in Ehrhard, II, 349, 387, 437 etc.

⁴⁰ For the Studite origin of some Metaphrastic mss, see J. Anderson, "The Date and Purpose of the Barberini Psalter", *CahArch*, 31 (1983), 35–67; but see the criticism in I. Hutter, "Le copiste du Métaphraste. On a center for manuscript production in eleventh-century Constantinople", in G. Prato (ed.), *I manoscritti greci tra riflessione e dibattito. Atti del V Colloquio Internazionale de Paleografia Greca (Cremona, 4–10 ottobre 1998)* (Florence, 2000), 535–86 and plates 1–39, 559 n. 113, with further bibliography. I thank Dr. Vera von Falkenhausen for reference to this work.

⁴¹ The hagiographical readings indicated with incipits in the *typikon* of the Evergetis refer almost exclusively to Metaphrastic texts, as already noticed by Ehrhard, II, 314–15.

cal hierarchy could well have owned Metaphrastic manuscripts, even if not in order to use them to their full extent as part of the liturgy. Judged from an economic perspective, few smaller monasteries or churches could at first sight be expected to have their ten volumes of Metaphrastic texts. Yet, some religious institutions that are not thought of as large can be imagined as owners of a Metaphrastic menologion, namely institutions founded or administered by rich and well-educated members of the urban élite. This is exactly the group of people who disliked the simple style of the old hagiographical texts and could have enjoyed the new versions, they would have had the means of paying the expenses for the production of a collection, even in the case of the lavishly illuminated versions of which several volumes from different sets are extant,⁴² and, even though few of them would retire into the seclusion of a monastery, they could in several ways keep up or in the future envisage a connection to a religious institution.

It had for centuries been customary for rich people in Byzantium to found religious institutions, whether out of piety, charity or the wish to secure personal belongings from expropriation.⁴³ In the middle of the eleventh century the learned Paul founded the Evergetis monastery mentioned above. Paul excerpted many passages from the Metaphrastic text for his large edifying work, the *Evergetinon* or *Synagoge*, and was perhaps the person who institutionalized the daily reading of Metaphrastic texts in the Evergetis monastery.⁴⁴ Thus, through private resources, he put the Metaphrastic menologion to the use I suppose it was meant for. At about the same time the middle-ranking provincial aristocrat Eustathios Boilas, *protospatharios* and *hypatos*, bequeathed his collection of books, among them four Metaphrastic volumes, to a church he had founded.⁴⁵ This was done, as he says,

⁴² See N.P. Ševčenko, *Illustrated Manuscripts of the Metaphrastian Menologion*, Studies in Medieval Manuscript Illumination, (Chicago, 1990).

⁴³ See J.P. Thomas, *Private Religious Foundations in the Byzantine Empire*, Dumbarton Oaks Studies 24 (Washington, DC, 1987).

⁴⁴ See J. Wortley, "The genre and sources of the *Synagoge*", in M. Mullett and A. Kirby (eds.), *The Theotokos Evergetis and eleventh-century monasticism*, Belfast Byzantine Texts and Translations 6.1 (Belfast, 1994).

⁴⁵ Ed. P. Lemerle, "Le testament d'Eustathios Boilas", *Cinq études sur le XI^e siècle byzantin* (Paris, 1977), 15–63. In the English translation by S. Vryonis Jr., "The Will of a Provincial Magnate, Eustathius Boilas (1059)", *DOP* 11 (1957), 263–77, at 269, the reference to the volumes of the Metaphrastic menologion has been erroneously rendered as 'books of translations'. See also the cases of Michael Attaleiates and Symeon Seth: Ehrhard, II, 678, and Thomas, *Private Religious Foundations*, 25ff.

so that his daughters could enjoy and use them at any time. Eustathios allows, however, the sale of these manuscripts, if done with the consent of the clergy. We must remember that the purchase of manuscripts, of which Eustathios Boilas had many, was, in uncertain times, one way of acquiring costly, moveable goods; and religious manuscripts may even have been further protected from expropriation as the property of a religious institution. Thus, though piety and literary interests were important factors, Metaphrastic manuscripts may equally have been valued as secure, accessible assets.

In this connection it may be pertinent to refer to the special practice of lay management of religious institutions that flourished in Byzantium in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Because of the destitute state of many religious institutions, the emperor was given the right to appoint a *charistikarios*, a lay protector of a religious institution.⁴⁶ This system had originally been introduced to secure the religious institutions from ruin, but was soon used or rather abused as a means of profit. The courtier Psellos, who wrote a work in praise of Symeon Metaphrastes, was in fact the *charistikarios* of several large monasteries.⁴⁷ Could it be that his praise of Symeon is a reflection of a certain practice at court, namely that of providing the religious institution of which one had been appointed the protector with a copy of the Metaphrastic menologion? The large-scale production of Metaphrastic menologia falls, at least, right in the period when the system of *charistike* was at its peak.

That not just rich people, but more precisely those that had connections to court were the commissioners of Metaphrastic menologia is a fact, for some references to the imperial court are to be found in eleventh-century Metaphrastic manuscripts. A *patrikios*, Niketas, is the copyist of our first dated Metaphrastic manuscript of 1042;⁴⁸ just as a *proedros*, John, was the donor of a probably luxurious edition of the Metaphrastic Menologion;⁴⁹ also, a *patrikios* of the Senate, Pothos, in 1057 paid 150 nomismata for the first seven Metaphrastic volumes.⁵⁰ But to this admittedly sparse evidence more can be adduced

⁴⁶ See *ibid.*, index, s.v. 'charistike'.

⁴⁷ See Thomas, *op. cit.*, 187 and 190 with bibliography.

⁴⁸ See Ehrhard, II, 617.

⁴⁹ The name occurs on the single folio left, cod. Princeton Theol.Sem. 11.21.1900. See Ehrhard, II, 617 and Ševčenko, *op. cit.*, 149–50.

⁵⁰ As indicated in the colophon of Patmos 245, see Ehrhard, II, 537–8.

to prove connections to the imperial court. The so-called imperial menologia, which are abridged menologia with a concluding prayer for the emperor at the end of each text, depend textually on the Metaphrastic menologia; these imperial menologia were produced, most probably for some emperor, in the eleventh century.⁵¹ Furthermore, much of the iconography found in the numerous illuminated Metaphrastic manuscripts has long been known to depend on the iconography found in the Menologion of Basil II, mentioned above.⁵²

Furthermore, by a stroke of luck, the earliest representatives of these illuminated Metaphrastic menologia are to be found among the products of a certain group of copyists and decorators. Noticing a peculiar script, Leroy found fifteen eleventh-century Metaphrastic manuscripts written by the same hand.⁵³ These results have lately been taken much further by Hutter, who not only has found more manuscripts of the same scribe but, by broadening the field of interest to include decoration, has been able to sketch the activities and even development of what she describes as an *ergasterion*, a manuscript workshop.⁵⁴ Metaphrastic manuscripts were thus not only the result of disparate copying; professionals went into the business. The place of production is, according to Hutter, most likely Constantinople; the years are from the 950's till close to the turn of the century.⁵⁵ Thus, a group of Metaphrastic manuscripts can be connected to a specific time and location and, through its iconography and texts, to imperially commissioned manuscripts. But the possible margin of imperial connections to the production of Metaphrastic manuscripts can be further widened. All the manuscripts originating from the *ergasterion* described by Hutter can be shown to belong to one of two subgroups within the corpus of Metaphrastic manuscripts, namely one of the two recensions of the Metaphrastic Menologion.

Modern editors have in quite a few cases been struck by two characteristics when preparing an edition of a Metaphrastic text: (a) the text offered by the manuscript corpus seems to fall in two recensions, each witnessed by approximately half of the existing manuscripts,⁵⁶

⁵¹ See Ehrhard, III, 341–442. The exact date of these menologia is, despite speculation, still uncertain.

⁵² See Ševčenko, op. cit., passim

⁵³ J. Leroy, “Un copiste de ménologes métaphrastiques”, *RSBN* 27 (1990), 101–32.

⁵⁴ Hutter, “Le copiste”.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 551ff.

⁵⁶ Noted by G. Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos; der Heilige Nikolaos in der griechischen Kirche*

and (b) textual variation (within the two recensions) is very small.⁵⁷ Since the textual differences between the two recensions (a) are, whenever two recensions are found, minor and of little importance for the understanding of the texts, the issue has attracted little attention, though some editors have tried to unravel the question of which recension came first.⁵⁸ The high degree of uniformity found in the text witnesses (b) is never discussed, except as an excuse for using only a small selection of manuscripts.⁵⁹ Thus, the two characteristics have been noted, but few conclusions have been drawn. The evidence for much wider conclusions has, nevertheless, already been supplied.

Despite the assertions of Halkin,⁶⁰ the textual uniformity in Metaphrastic texts can hardly be ascribed to the respect that these texts provoked among copyists; even if diligent, copyists are bound to make mistakes. A much more likely explanation is that many of the manuscripts were produced at the same place, as copies of the same original(s); this was probably the case of the manuscripts produced in the *ergasterion* studied by Hutter. Textual uniformity is likely to be the result of centralized production.

As to the two recensions, a closer look into the lists of Metaphrastic manuscripts offered by Ehrhard will show that there do exist more significant differences between the two, the most important of which are found in the selection of texts rather than within a given text. These significant differences appear primarily in the tenth and last volume of the Metaphrastic collection, but in order to understand the full range of this issue it is necessary to start by looking at the whole collection.

(Leipzig-Berlin, 1913–17), II, 115ff. and 315ff.; H. Delehaye, *Les légendes des saints militaires* (Paris, 1909), 26, 63, 87–8; *BHG*², 273; Ehrhard, II, 633–4; G. Garitte, “Histoire du texte imprimé de la Vie grecque de S. Antoine”, *Bulletin de l’institut historique belge de Rome* 22 (1942–3), 5–29; F. Paschke, *Die beiden griechischen Klementinen-Epitomen und ihre Anhänge*, TU 90 (Berlin, 1966), 239ff.; B. Flusin, *Saint Anastase le Perse et l’histoire de la Palestine au début du VII^e siècle* (Paris, 1992), and Flusin and Paramelle in Petitmengin et al. (eds.), *Pélagie*, II, 19ff.

⁵⁷ Delehaye, *Les légendes*, 26; F. Halkin, *Euphémie de Chalcédoine*, SubsHag 41, (Brussels, 1965), 142; idem, *Douze récits byzantins sur Saint Jean Chrysostome*, SubsHag 60 (Brussels, 1977), 474; F. Iadevaia, *Simeone Metafraste. Vita di s. Stefano minore* (Messina, 1984), 23.

⁵⁸ Anrich, op. cit., II, 119ff. and Paschke, op. cit., 243.

⁵⁹ Iadevaia, *Simeone Metafrasta*, 23 n. 1.

⁶⁰ See above n. 57.

One of Ehrhard's most important discoveries was that the Metaphrastic Menologion consisted of 148 texts, in the vast majority of cases found in ten volumes. No such complete ten-volume edition is extant today; what we have is in most cases a single extant volume out of an original set of ten. However, we do have an almost complete series of 7 volumes (vols. 1–7, 10), owned until modern times by the monastery of S. Maria del Patire in Rossano, but now in the Vatican.⁶¹ These manuscripts are among the products of the *ergasterion* investigated by Hutter.⁶² From this unique set much can be gathered about the interconnections of the double recensions discovered by modern editors. The *Life of St Nicholas of Myra*, as usual found in vol. 5, thus in the Vat. gr. 2038 of the Patire-set, is in the recension 1 of Anrich.⁶³ If we look into our vol. 4, i.e. Vat. gr. 2039, we see that the *Life of Clement* has the incipit *b* of Paschke.⁶⁴ Since Anrich thought that his recension 1 was the original, whereas Paschke deemed his incipit *a* to be the forerunner of *b*, one of them is bound to be wrong, for, as we see in the Patire set, recension 1 and incipit *b* go together. In the tenth and last volume of the Metaphrastic menologion, the Patire set (Vat. gr. 2043) has what to Ehrhard seemed to be the standard incipit of the *Life of St Prokopios*; let us call it incipit 1.⁶⁵ Now there are three other characteristics in vol. 10 that can be indicated as connected to this recension to which the Patire set belongs, which I shall call recension 1. The details that I have been able to ascertain until now may be summarized thus:

	Recension 1 (Patire)	Recension 2
vol. 4, text 21: Clement	incipit b (Paschke)	incipit a
vol. 5, text 3: Nicholas	recension 1 (Anrich)	recension 2
vol. 10, text 5: Prokopios	incipit 1 (Delehaye)	incipit 2
text 11: Mandylion	main text (Dobschütz)	not incl./xv of Dobsch.
'text 13': 12 prophets	included	not included
illuminations	many	none

⁶¹ See Ehrhard, II, 339–40, 408–9, 433, 481, 494–5, 539, 628, 682.

⁶² Hutter, op. cit., 550ff.

⁶³ Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos*, II, 116. Anrich lists 5 mss of recension 1 and 11 of recension 2; thus the distribution of the remaining 74 mss is not known.

⁶⁴ Paschke, op. cit., 239ff. Paschke found 61 mss with incipit *a* and 28 with incipit *b*.

⁶⁵ Delehaye, *Les légendes*, 87–8. Delehaye lists 9 mss of recension 1 and 4 of recension 2. See also Ehrhard, II, 634 n. 1.

As indicated above, the Patire set shows us the interrelation of the double recensions found in the texts on SS Clement, Nicholas and Prokopios. The three following characteristics of the recensions deal less with text version and more with contents and decoration. The text on the *Translation of the Mandyllion*, closely connected to the emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos, is, as edited by Dobschütz, only included in the manuscripts of recension 1;⁶⁶ in recension 2 it is either, as in most cases, absent⁶⁷ or, as in a single (or two?)⁶⁸ manuscript(s), included in the version which is probably closer to the original version, if it is not *the* version, authored by Constantine VII.⁶⁹ Of all the texts in the Metaphrastic menologion, this is the text connected to the most recent emperor, and the presence of exactly this text in the recension 1 and its absence, or inclusion in an older recension, in recension 2 seems to reflect some disagreement, the details of which I have not yet been able to disentangle. I do, however, suppose that the recension 2 did *not* include a Mandyllion-text originally, for the presence of the old version in one (or two) manuscript(s) belonging to a group where this text is normally absent, is easier explained as a later addition. If this is so, we may suggest that its presence marks out the recension 1 as more pro-Macedonian, that is more subservient to the imperial dynasty to which Constantine Porphyrogenitus and quite a few of his successors, including Basil II and his brother Constantine VIII, belonged.

The two last differences between the two recensions are of a different nature and more technical. All illuminated Metaphrastic manuscripts seem to belong to recension 1. This goes at least for volume 10.⁷⁰ The question of illuminations is in volume 10 further-

⁶⁶ Ed. in E. von Dobschütz, *Christusbilder*, TU 3. The Metaphrastic mss used by Dobschütz are the nos. 2, 17, 18, 20, 22, 23, 24, 26, 28, 29, 31 (Patire), 32, 35, 37 in Ehrhard's list of vol. 10-mss Ehrhard, II, 616–631 and no. 13 in his list of vol. 9–10-mss, II, 643–53. The remaining mss used by Dobschütz are not Metaphrastic mss in the definition of Ehrhard, see III, 1ff.

⁶⁷ See Ehrhard, II, 632.

⁶⁸ I have not been able to verify that the cod. Escorial cod.gr. 316 (y II 11) has this version, which it according to my scheme must have, since it agrees with the rec. 2 in all other details.

⁶⁹ The text witnessed by the mss x (= Par.gr. 1474, Metaphrastic vol. 10) and v (non-Metaphrastic) in the edition of Dobschütz.

⁷⁰ See nos. 10 (?), 12, 16, 17, 23 in Ehrhard, II, 616–31. The only other illuminated ms that I, for the moment, with certainty can point to as belonging to recension 1 is the Copenhagen gl.kongl.saml. cod.fol. 167, which has the incipit *b* of Paschke.

more connected to the presence of a group of small texts, appended at the end in all manuscripts of recension 1.⁷¹ These texts, one on each of the twelve Old-Testament prophets, were by Ehrhard deemed foreign to the original contents of the Metaphrastic Menologion, for the texts do not fit into the liturgical sequence of the Menologion; they are therefore quite clearly not part of its original structure.⁷² How then can we explain their presence in approximately half of the manuscripts of vol. 10? Well, first of all, the actual feast dates of these twelve prophets were left blank in the Menologion, so a text was needed,⁷³ only we would expect the texts to have been inserted at their appropriate dates. But then, why would somebody incorporate these texts, that were probably needed, as an appendix? The explanation is, as far as I can see, the iconographic programme that came along. Standard illuminations existed for these prophets, who were portrayed also in other types of collections.⁷⁴ Their appearance at the end of the tenth volume may therefore be explained on the basis of an iconographic programme. What I suggest is that recension 1 was from its outset a luxuriously illuminated version of the Metaphrastic Menologion in which the texts on the twelve prophets had been inserted, but because the twelve single illuminations were thought of as a series, texts and illuminations were appended at the end. In later non-illuminated copies the texts would, as a result of faithful copying, remain in their place, even if there was no longer an iconographic program to argue for their status as appendix. The fact that all existing illuminated manuscripts can be shown to belong to this recension agrees well with such an assumption on the first set of this recension 1. If the 'official publication' under Constantine VIII, which I have argued for elsewhere, really took place, I find it difficult not to connect this recension 1 to that event. The manuscript produced on that occasion would then be the beginning of recension 1.

⁷¹ Nos. 1, 2, 4, 6, 12, 13, 16, 18, 20, 22, 23, 26, 32, 35 in Ehrhard's list of vol. 10-mss (II, 616–31) and no. 13 in his list of vol. 9–10-mss (II, 643–53). Due to missing folios at the end of the mss, the following nos. of the first list may originally have included the text: 10, 24, 25, 27, 31 (Patire), 37, 38; and in the latter list: 2, 3, 5, 11.

⁷² Ehrhard, II, 632.

⁷³ See my *Symeon Metaphrastes* (see note 24).

⁷⁴ J. Lowden, *Illuminated Prophet Books. A Study of Byzantine Manuscripts of the Major and Minor Prophets* (University Park & London, 1988).

As to the origin or centre of production of recension 2, the case is more uncertain. None of the manuscripts known to belong to this recension can be connected to any institution or person. Since the two recensions, at least from some date in the eleventh century, are parallel, another centre of production could be thought of, for again as in the case of the first recension we see a large degree of textual uniformity and also little variation in the list of texts included. Probably some monastic establishment should be thought of. Whether this recension is more faithful to the original contents of the *Metaphrastic Menologion*, if we can speak of such, or whether it may even be the version read 'in the houses' of Eprem, I do not know. But, in their exclusion of the *Mandylyon* text and in their probable lack of illustrations, these manuscripts seem to bear the mark of belonging to a less wealthy and less imperial milieu.

Thus, by combining the results of research into *Metaphrastic* texts and manuscripts, we catch a glimpse of the world that the *Metaphrastic* manuscripts were probably part of. The large number of manuscripts in itself suggests that some kind of organized copying took place, and this is supported by the textual uniformity within the two recensions and in the retention of iconographic structures, like the texts on the twelve prophets, even in non-illuminated manuscripts. Furthermore, the admittedly few but clear references in manuscripts to persons attached to the court, the iconographic and textual links to imperially commissioned manuscripts, and not least Psellos' panegyric to Symeon *Metaphrastes*, show that those who paid for these manuscripts were probably persons who, like Psellos, found in these texts a way to combine literary, religious, and also economic interests.

THE YEAR 1000 IN BYZANTIUM

Paul Magdalino

The second millennium of the Common Era has been and gone. To examine, at this time, the historical significance of the first millennium is not just an artificial and symbolic exercise. The experience of anticipating, living through, and moving on from a millennium year is one which we share with people who consciously went through it one thousand years ago. There is perhaps no better way of measuring what the chronological distance means in historical terms than to consider whether the shared experience closes or widens the gap between the medieval and the modern millennium, between the advent of the eleventh and that of the twenty-first century A.D./C.E. Is the Christian perception of the millennium essentially the same as it was in the tenth and eleventh centuries, or does the emphasis on the commemoration of the birth of Christ given by church leaders today reflect a shift away from a fundamentally (and fundamentalist) eschatological preoccupation on the part of the medieval church? Is the apocalyptic fervour of extremist sects and cults in today's world a last gasp of Early Christian and medieval apocalypticism, or is it only a distorted echo of a way of thinking that was prevalent in pre-modern times? Was it normal, one thousand years ago, to expect the end of the world, or some sort of cosmic transition, sooner rather than later? Or was such expectation as eccentric and alarmist as it is now; in other words, are the indifference, scepticism and basic materialism of modern secular man the best guide to the feelings with which most medieval believers contemplated the future of their world? If so, is the best way to identify with the medieval experience to imagine it not in its own religious terms, but in terms of the catastrophes evoked by modern scientific materialism: nuclear holocaust, collision with an asteroid, the millenium bug?

Most historians seem to have assumed, without thinking too much about it, that the mood at the end of the first Christian millennium was one of business as usual, business being *mutatio fœdalis, incastellamento*, monastic reform, sacral kingship, itinerant kingship, or

whatever.¹ At the same time, most historians would, if challenged, no doubt concede that the year 1000 meant more then, at least to people who knew it was the year 1000, than the year 2000 does now, and that the end of the world, or the beginning of a new world order, was expected with greater apprehension at the end of the tenth century than at the end of the twentieth. Moreover, the idea that this apprehension was great enough to make an impact on historical actions and events has been around since the seventeenth century.² Jules Michelet romantically conjured up 'les terreurs de l'an mil' in the 1830s; Ferdinand Lot dispelled them scornfully in the 1930s, but Georges Duby partially rehabilitated them in the 1960s. In the last twenty years, their case has been argued with great sophistication by Johannes Fried and Richard Landes; Landes, indeed, has taken the argument well beyond the concept of apocalyptic terror, and developed the thesis that the period saw a repressed surge of millenarian hope.³ The terror denialist position was restated forcefully in 1998 by Sylvain Gougenheim,⁴ but Landes has come back with an article in a recent volume of *Speculum*.⁵ There are some worrying aspects to Landes' thesis. He is monocausally obsessed with eschatology to the exclusion of other factors, and projects this obsession on to his sources. He tends to assume millenarianism where it might be more appropriate to discern straightforward apocalypticism. He does not have enough time for the spiritual and personal dimension of eschatology: the way in which the Last Things are realised for each believer in his or her inner experience of Judgement and the Kingdom of Heaven; Landes thus ignores the role of this interiorised, individualised eschatology in dehistoricising the End in all periods of Christian history. In his project for the study of millen-

¹ See in general the various contributions to *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, III: c. 900–c. 1024, ed. T. Reuter (Cambridge, 1999).

² The historiography of the millennial mentality is extensively surveyed in the works of R. Landes and S. Gougenheim cited in the following notes.

³ J. Fried, "Endzeiterwartung um die Jahrtausendwende", *Deutsches Archiv*, 45 (45) (1989), 385–473; R. Landes, "Lest the Millennium be Fulfilled: apocalyptic expectations and the pattern of western chronography, 100–800 C.E.", in W. Verbeke, D. Verhelst, A. Welkenhuysen (eds.), *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages* (Louvain, 1988), 137–211; idem, *Relics, Apocalypse and the Deceits of History: Ademar of Chabannes. 989–1034* (Cambridge MA, 1995).

⁴ S. Gougenheim, *Les fausses terreurs de l'an mil. Attente de la fin des temps ou approfondissement de la foi?* (Paris, 1999).

⁵ R. Landes, "The Fear of an Apocalyptic Year 1000: Augustinian Historiography, Medieval and Modern", *Speculum* 75 (2000), 97–145.

nial and apocalyptic movements as ongoing phenomena, represented by his Center for Millennial Studies at Boston University, Landes has come uncomfortably close to assuming that the expectations of 'l'an mil' can be interpreted according to later manifestations of apocalyptic belief.⁶ But on the whole, Landes and Fried represent a considerable advance in historical interpretation, whereas Gougenheim defends an entrenched position. His reading of the sources is two-dimensional and positivist; theirs is imaginative, sensitive and historicist. The conclusion of Landes' *Speculum* article puts it well:

For all its ephemeral volatility, its protean qualities, its documentary disguises, the phenomenon of apocalyptic expectations and chiliastic enthusiasms belongs within the purview of the millennial generation. Otherwise we fail to appreciate the hearts and minds of people who lived, not in our Middle Ages, but in their Last Age.⁷

This sentiment is cautiously endorsed in the *New Cambridge Medieval History*, where Timothy Reuter writes in the introduction to volume III:

although it is clear that many of those who lived around the eschatologically significant dates of 1000 and 1033 did not do so in fear (or hope) of the Second Coming, it is, at the end of the second millennium, less clear than it seemed to Ferdinand Lot and his contemporaries that no-one at all did. It is more likely that the intensification of religious experience around the millennium, perceptible in a number of ways, was, at least in part, a response to the millennium itself.⁸

Whether this represents the beginning of a new consensus, or whether, as seems more likely, the debate is set to continue, 'l'an mil' is back on the agenda for the western Middle Ages. It is all the more remarkable, therefore, that the millennium has never been on the agenda for Byzantine studies. A. Vasiliev raised the question only to dismiss it in his article of the 1940s which was the first serious modern discussion of Byzantine eschatology. Writing at the high point of terror-denialism, Vasiliev stated that the millennium meant little in the West and nothing at all in the East.⁹ A very different conclusion

⁶ See the Center's web site (<http://www.mille.org>), and the first issue of its journal, *Millennial Stew* (Brookline MA, 1998).

⁷ Landes, "The Fear of an Apocalyptic Year", 145.

⁸ Op. cit. (n. 1), 21.

⁹ A. Vasiliev, "Medieval Ideas of the End of the World: West and East", *Byzantion* 16 (1942-3), 462-502, at 469-70.

might have been drawn from the rich material gathered by Gerhard Podskalsky in 1972, if Podskalsky himself had been interested in the historical context and the historical significance of the evidence, much of it unpublished, that he presented, but his express concern was with the history of a biblical motif.¹⁰ With one recent exception, the few Byzantinists who have concerned themselves with eschatology since Podskalsky have not focused on the problem of the millennium. Cyril Mango's chapter on 'The future of mankind' in his book on Byzantium (1980) notes suggestively in passing that the late tenth century was a time of doom and gloom, not of triumphal optimism at the empire's military success.¹¹ In my own essay on Byzantine eschatology (written in 1988, published in 1993), I went further than either Mango or Podskalsky in signalling the importance of the first Christian millennium as one of a series of end dates which the Byzantines projected in the course of their history, but I refrained from suggesting that it was the most important in the series, or as important in the East as in the West.¹² The full implications of the evidence were not stated in print until 2000, with the publication of an article in which Wolfram Brandes surveys the published data and links them, suggestively, with Liudprand of Cremona's account of his embassy to Constantinople in 968.¹³

It is not hard to see why the Byzantine equivalent of 'l'an mil' has been slow to capture the imagination or the curiosity of Byzantinists. Quite apart from the deterrents which they experience in common with their western colleagues—the low-grade, or low-yield, quality of the evidence, and the low priority accorded to apocalypics in general—1000 A.D./C.E. was not the year 1000 in the Byzantine calendar; it was the year 6508 *anno mundi*, or ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου. Throughout the Middle Ages Byzantium clung to the chronology, computed in the second and third centuries, which placed the

¹⁰ G. Podskalsky, *Byzantinische Reichseschatologie. Die Periodisierung der Weltgeschichte in den vier Grossreichen (Daniel 2 und 7) und dem Tausendjährigen Friedensreiche (Apok. 20): eine motiwgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Munich, 1972), 92–8.

¹¹ C. Mango, *Byzantium. The Empire of New Rome* (London, 1980), chapter 11, at 211–2.

¹² P. Magdalino, "The history of the future and its uses: prophecy, policy and propaganda", in *The Making of Byzantine History. Studies dedicated to Donald M. Nicol*, ed. R. Beaton and C. Roueché (Aldershot, 1993), 3–34, at 24–6.

¹³ W. Brandes, "Liudprand von Cremona (*Legatio* Cap. 39–410) und eine bisher unbeachtete west-östliche Korrespondenz über die Bedeutung des Jahres 1000 A.D.", *BZ* 93 (2000), 435–63.

birth of Christ at 5500 years from the Creation, and viewed the millennia of world history as days in a cosmic week, corresponding to the days of Creation, on the principle that a thousand years are but a day in God's sight (Psalm 90.4; 2 Peter 3.8).¹⁴ By this reckoning, the significant end dates were, first, the year 6000, corresponding to the end of the day in which God had completed his creation of the world, and, then, the end of the seventh millennium which was equivalent to the day on which God had rested from his labours. Indeed, it is on these dates that most of the recent studies of Byzantine eschatology have concentrated, with rich results. Paul Alexander,¹⁵ Gerhard Podskalsky,¹⁶ Roger Scott,¹⁷ Susan Ashbrook Harvey,¹⁸ Oliver Nicholson,¹⁹ myself,²⁰ and, most recently and definitively, Wolfram Brandes,²¹ have proved beyond doubt that the decades around 500 A.D. were a time of intense apocalyptic anxiety and speculation in the East. It has long been known that many Orthodox Christians in the later Middle Ages, including the Patriarch Gennadios Scholarios, firmly expected the world to end in 1492, corresponding to the year 7000 in what had become the standard Byzantine computation of A.M. chronology.²² Recent articles by Stavros Kourouses,²³ Michael Flier²⁴ and Marie-Hélène Congourdeau,²⁵

¹⁴ On Byzantine chronology in general, see V. Grumel, *La chronologie* (= P. Lemerle et al., *Traité d'études byzantines*, I) (Paris, 1958).

¹⁵ P. Alexander, *The Oracle of Baalbek* (Washington, DC, 1967).

¹⁶ G. Podskalsky, "Marginalien zur byzantinischen Reichseschatologie", *BZ* 77 (1974), 357.

¹⁷ R. Scott, "Malalas, The Secret History and Justinian's Propaganda", *DOP* 39 (1985), 99–109.

¹⁸ S. Ashbrook Harvey, "Remembering Pain: Syriac Historiography and the Separation of the Churches", *Byzantion*, 58 (1988), 295–308.

¹⁹ O. Nicholson, "Golden Age and the End of the World: Myths of Mediterranean Life from Lactantius to Joshua the Stylite", in J. Chiat and K.L. Reyerson (eds.), *The Medieval Mediterranean, Cross-Cultural Contacts*, Medieval Studies at Minnesota 3 (St Cloud MI, 1989), 11–18.

²⁰ Magdalino, "History of the Future", 4–9.

²¹ W. Brandes, "Anastasios ὁ Δίκωρος: Endzeiterwartung und Kaiserkritik in Byzanz um 500 n.Chr.", *BZ* 90 (1997), 24–63.

²² Mango, *Byzantium*, 213.

²³ St. Kourouses, "Αἱ ἀντιλήψεις περὶ τῶν ἐσχάτων τοῦ κόσμου καὶ ἡ κατὰ τὸ ἔτος 1346 πτώσις τοῦ τροῦλλου τῆς Ἀγίας Σοφίας", *ΕΕΒΣ* 37 (1969–70), 211–50.

²⁴ M. Flier, "Sunday in Medieval Russian Culture: *Nedelya* versus *Voskresenie*", in *Medieval Russian Culture*, ed. H. Birnbaum, M.S. Flier (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, 1984), 105–49, at 144–5, 155–6.

²⁵ M.-H. Congourdeau, "Byzance et la fin du monde. Courants de pensée apocalyptique sous les Paléologues", in *Les traditions apocalyptiques au tournant de la chute de Constantinople*, ed. B. Lellouch, S. Yérasimos (Paris, 1999), 55–97.

among others, have emphasised the importance of this belief in the religious culture of the Greeks and Orthodox Slavs in the period which saw the final decline of Byzantium and the rise of Moscow.

It is undeniable that after the end of the world failed to materialise at the end of the sixth millennium, the end of the seventh millennium eventually came into view as the ultimate *terminus ante quem*. Byzantine churchmen made much of the symbolic value of the eighth day, and thus by implication the eighth millennium, as the time of perfect fulfilment, when the cosmic week would come full circle.²⁶ This does not mean, however, that when the year 6000 passed without incident, the alarm was automatically reset to go off a thousand years later. On any sensitive reading of the evidence, it is clear that the apocalyptic mood of the late fifth century carried into the sixth century and beyond, intensified by the course of historical events: the turn of the cosmic millennium was not a single crisis moment, but marked the entry into a time zone where the end could come at any moment, and did not have to wait until the evening of the seventh day. For the seventh day of Creation, when God rested, was open-ended in the biblical account and not defined by morning and evening like the previous six. Thus in the course of the millennium from 492 to 1492, the appointment with doomsday was frequently rescheduled before expectations came to bear exclusively on the final deadline. In what follows I shall argue that of all these intermediate dates, those in the middle of the seventh Byzantine millennium, corresponding to the first Christian millennium, were by far the most important, since they harmonised particularly well with Byzantine imperial ideology.

My reading of the evidence is based on two methodological considerations, which represent a fusion of conclusions that various scholars have arrived at independently.²⁷ They involve a mixed response to the question we posed at the outset, i.e. whether the modern experience of the second millennium is a guide to the medieval experience of the first. It has to be recognised that the medieval view of the future was culturally very different from ours, being much closer

²⁶ A. Sharf, "The Eighth Day of the Week", in *Καθηγήτρια. Essays presented to Joan Hussey for her 80th Birthday*, ed. J. Chrysostomides (London, 1988), 27–50; G. Podskalsky, "Ruhestand oder Vollendung? Zur Symbolik des achten Tages in der griechisch-byzantinischen Theologie", in *Fest und Alltag in Byzanz*, ed. G. Prinzing, D. Simon (Munich, 1990), 157–66, 216–19.

²⁷ Works cited above, nn. 3, 12; see also J. Gil, "A la espera del fin del mundo", *Erytheia. Revista de estudios bizantinos y neogriegos* 21 (2000), 7–38.

to its Early Christian roots in Jewish messianic prophecy. It was rooted in a culture where belief in divinely produced prophecy and signs was ideologically correct, and it was based on the enduring conviction that Christ had founded the Church to prepare for his return, which, like the arrival of the bridegroom in the parable of the ten virgins (Matt. 25.1–13), made no sense if it was delayed indefinitely, because the Incarnation was the crowning act in the fulfilment of God's plan. Churchmen in both east and west routinely declared that Christ had come late in time.²⁸ Since time, by any Christian reckoning, had begun less than 6000 years before the birth of Christ, the end of time could not be far off—there was simply not enough unfinished business left to occupy thousands or even hundreds of years. Geological time was unknown, and the astronomical time-scale of the ancient Babylonians, Egyptians and Greeks was categorically rejected.²⁹ Only in the thousand-year reign of the saints foretold in Revelation (20.1–7) was there any scriptural authority for an extended period of time between the Incarnation and the Last Things. But the interpretation of this prophecy was highly problematic, and, as we shall see, Byzantium did not officially take it literally until the millennium was nearly up. Byzantine use of it thus conformed to the Early Christian and medieval tendency to date the end to within a relatively short time of the present—300 years at the outside.

Dating the end took three main forms: 'blind dating', 'computus dating', and 'dating on the side'. Blind dating was the reflex to natural phenomena or human events which were believed to herald the end of the world: the earthquakes of 557–8,³⁰ the Persian War of 605–628,³¹ the falling stars of 763,³² the violent gales of 907³³ were

²⁸ For the west, see Gougenheim, *Les fausses terreurs*, 74ff.; for Byzantium, see e.g. Photios, *Epistulae et Amphilochia*, IV, ed. L. Westerink (Leipzig, 1986), no. 7, p. 40.

²⁹ George Synkellos, *Ecloga Chronographica*, ed. A.A. Mosshammer (Leipzig, 1984), 14–38; cf. W. Adler, *Time Immemorial. Archaic History and its Sources in Christian Chronography from Julius Africanus to George Syncellus* (Washington, DC, 1989), 50–71.

³⁰ Agathias, *Historiae*, V. 5, ed. R. Keydell (Berlin, 1967), 169–70; Magdalino, "History of the Future", 6.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 18–19.

³² Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig, 1883), I, 353; trans. C. Mango and R. Scott (Oxford, 1997), 493. The same event evoked the same response in both the Latin West and the Syriac East: *Annales Xantenses*, MGH SS, II, 223; Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel Mahre, trans. R. Heispe, CSCO, ScriptSyr 213 (Louvain, 1989), 173–4 (*sub anno* 764–5).

³³ Theoph. Cont., 371.

all interpreted in this way. Computus dating was the projection of numerically significant dates: dates marking major round numbers or fractional divisions within the millennial scheme; dates obtained by gematria, marking the numerical values of sacred names such as Ἰησοῦς or Σταυρός;³⁴ dates marking the completion of major astronomical cycles, notably the 532-year Easter cycle and the cycle of twelve zodiacal years.³⁵ Dating on the side was the chronology projected by apocalyptic texts, those blends of sibylline-style oracles and biblical-style prophecies which narrated, in the future tense, the events and imperial reigns leading to the destruction of the Roman Empire which would precede the reign of Antichrist, the Second Coming and the Last Judgement.³⁶ These texts were constantly re-issued to update the part of the story which was *vaticinium ex eventu*, prophecy after the event, and to adapt the sequel accordingly. By far the most important and influential re-issue in the Middle Ages was the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, composed in Syriac in 691–2, and rapidly translated into Greek and Latin, which introduced the standard motifs of the destruction of Islam and the Last Emperor who would lay down his crown in Jerusalem.³⁷ The length of time allotted to events which had not yet occurred varies from text to text and is not always specified, but it is never more than fifty years.

All these datings were, of course, repeated attempts to reschedule a deadline that had failed to materialise, and they reflect another important feature of the Early Christian and medieval eschatological mentality: it never gave up on the end of the world, however overdue, and, equally, it never let a deadline get too close without shifting it. Sometimes the evidence is reassuringly explicit, but more often the rescheduling process has to be traced through indirect evidence: through the readjustments to the chronology of world history

³⁴ For Ἰησοῦς, see below; for σταυρός, see S. Lampros, “Ἡ πρόρρησις τοῦ Ἀνδριτζοπούλου”, *Νέος Ἑλληνομνημίων* 3 (1906), 474–6.

³⁵ See below.

³⁶ See in general P.J. Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1985).

³⁷ Syriac version ed. and trans. G.J. Reinink, *Die syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius*, CSCO 540–41 (ScriptSyr 220–21) (Louvain, 1993); Greek and Latin versions ed. W.J. Aerts and G.A.A. Kortekaas, *Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius. Die ältesten griechischen und lateinischen Übersetzungen*, CSCO 569–70 (Subsidia 97–8). For the Last Emperor, see in general H. Möhring, *Der Weltkaiser der Endzeit: Entstehung, Wandel und Wirkung einer tausendjährigen Weissagung* (Stuttgart, 2000), esp. 54–104 on Pseudo-Methodius.

made by chroniclers and computists; through the special attention given to significant events; through the use of apocalyptic language, motifs, etc. It is here that the terror-denialists base their case, so it is here that a second methodological consideration becomes relevant. The evidence is inherently volatile, protean and disguised, because dating the end, though compulsive, was known to be fallible and unauthorised. Christ had told his disciples, 'Of that day knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only' (Matt. 24.36), and, 'It is not for you to know the times and the seasons which the Father has placed in his own power' (Acts 1.7–8). The Church, while insisting that the Second Coming and Last Judgement would be real historical events, had good pastoral reasons for discouraging speculation, and for exhorting the faithful to prepare themselves individually for Judgement here and now, regardless of the future of mankind. It is thus understandable that prophets of doom, or of a new dawn, were reluctant to commit themselves to exact predictions that might prove wrong. It is equally understandable that firm predictions which did prove wrong—as they all did—tended not to be preserved for posterity, and that significant moments and events which had passed were divested of any apocalyptic significance.

Given everything that worked against the lasting documentation of apocalyptic expectations, the amount of direct evidence surviving from Byzantium is remarkable, so much so that a better case for apocalyptic terror can be made for Byzantium than for the West, especially at the end of the first Christian millennium. At least eight texts can be identified predicting the occurrence of the Last Things in the middle of the seventh millennium.³⁸ Three specifically name the year 6500 (1a, 2, 3), two mention the middle of the millennium without being more precise (4, 5), three point explicitly to the thousandth anniversary of the Resurrection as the end date (1b, 6, 8), and the same terminus is implied by the note which refers to the birth of Antichrist 1000 years after the birth of Christ (7). Four of the predictions form separate treatises, one anonymous (1a–b) the other three under the names of Theophanios the Monk (2), Niketas the Paphlagonian (6), and Anthimos, *chartophylax* of the Great Church (8). Two of these treatises (1b, 8) are found in mini-dossiers of apocalyptic texts which include indirect predictions of the millennium end

³⁸ Listed, with full references, in the appendix.

date.³⁹ Other direct predictions are embedded in larger works: one is inserted into an anonymous saint's life, the *Life of St Niphon* (5); another is found in the liturgical commentary attributed to Germanos (3), the so-called *Historia Ecclesiastica*, where the bishop's gesture of blessing after the Gospel reading is said to trace the letters ϣϥ (6500); a third prediction forms part of a long (and very anti-Jewish) commentary on the Old Testament prophets under the name of Basil, metropolitan of Neopatras (4). While the authorship of Germanos may be suspect, there is no reason to doubt that of Basil, or indeed those of Theophanios, Anthimos and Niketas the Paphlagonian. Thus a senior member of the episcopate, a senior cleric of the Great Church, and a well-known homilist and polemicist of tenth-century Constantinople were prepared to put their names to statements to the effect that the world would end around the year 1000 A.D.

These direct testimonies are supported by the indirect evidence of several other texts. According to Leo the Deacon, in the preface to his history of the period 959–976, recent cosmic disorders (celestial phenomena, earthquakes, meteorological disturbances, wars, uprooting of populations) were widely interpreted to signify that 'life is undergoing a transformation, and the awaited Second Descent of God our Saviour is at the gate'.⁴⁰ Although Leo makes no connection with the date, c. 1000 A.D., at which he was writing, this is clearly a case of computus dating reinforced by blind dating in response to events such as the civil wars of the late 970s and the 980s, and the earthquake of 989.⁴¹ The same mood of apocalyptic angst is conveyed by John Geometres in a poem written during the civil wars.⁴²

Two tenth-century chronicles contain reports of two astrological forecasts which were evidently manufactured to support the expectation that the world would end in the near future. One of these forecasts is a twice-updated version of the horoscope of Islam attributed to Stephen of Alexandria on 3 September 621 (A.M. 6130),

³⁹ Par. gr. 1111 (11th c.), fols. 52v–55v; Athos, Karakallou, 14 (12th c.), fols. 250v–254r; cf. Podskalsky, *Reichseschatologie*, 96–7; P. Magdalino, "Une prophétie inédite des environs de l'an 965 attribuée à Léon le Philosophe (MS Karakallou 14, f.253r–254r)", *TM* 14 (2002) (*Mélanges Gilbert Dagron*), 391–402.

⁴⁰ Leo. Diac., 4.

⁴¹ See below.

⁴² Ed. J.A. Cramer, *Anecdota Graeca*, IV, 271–3.

and originally composed soon after 775.⁴³ According to the first update, which occurs in the so-called chronicle of Leo the Grammarian, the dominion of the 'Hagarenes' would end after 336 years, i.e. in 957 A.D.⁴⁴ The later tenth-century chronicle incorporated verbatim into the compilation of George Kedrenos (late 11th/early 12th c.) reports the same horoscope, but dates it to 622 (A.M. 6131) and gives a figure of 369 years for the hegemony of Islam, which is thus extended by 1 + 33 years, i.e. to 992.⁴⁵ A marginal note to the chronicle of Leo the Grammarian records another bogus horoscope, said to have been cast by the astrologer Vettius Valens on Constantine's orders at the foundation of Constantinople in 330: it revealed that the city would last for 696 years.⁴⁶ In the later chronicle, this note is incorporated into the text of the narrative.⁴⁷ These additions were clearly meant to provide firm dates for significant events that were necessary preconditions for the end of the world. The destruction of Rome/Constantinople, which naturally went with the end of the Roman Empire, had been integral to all apocalyptic thought since the Book of Revelation, and all apocalyptic prophecies from the seventh century promised an interval of a few decades between the final defeat of Islam and the final extinction of the Empire. Thus the chronicles of Leo the Grammarian and the source of Kedrenos document successive stages in the future projection of the standard apocalyptic scenario. The earlier chronicle, edited probably after 931⁴⁸ and certainly before 957/8, sets a date for the destruction of Islam

⁴³ See H. Usener, "De Stephano Alexandrino", *Kleine Schriften* III (Leipzig, 1913), 266–89; cf. Brandes, "Liudprand", 461.

⁴⁴ Ed. Cramer from Par.gr.854, *Anecdota Graeca*, II, 338; ed. I. Bekker, CSHB (Bonn, 1842), 152–3. The 336 years comprised '309 years in strength and another 27 years in disorder and disasters'.

⁴⁵ George Kedrenos, *Historiarum compendium*, ed. I. Bekker, CSHB, 2 vols (Bonn, 1838), I, 717: 309 years of strength, plus 56 years of weakness, rounded up to 60 apparently on the authority of Is. 22.16–17.

⁴⁶ Ed. Cramer, *Anecdota Graeca*, II, 297 n. 32

⁴⁷ Kedrenos, ed. Bekker, I, 497; cf. Brandes, "Liudprand", 461–2, and Podskalsky, *Reichseschatologie*, 97. As Podskalsky points out, the 'horoscope' also circulated separately in a treatise under the name of Hippolytus, which occurs in both the mini-dossiers of eschatological material mentioned above (n. 39).

⁴⁸ 931 A.D., the 309th year from the supposed date of the horoscope (see above, n. 44), did indeed occur at a turning point in the fortunes of the Abbasid caliphate, and saw a decisive Byzantine victory over the emirate of Melitene: see H. Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates* (London-New York, 1986), 187–99, esp. 193ff.; M. Whittow, *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium, 600–1025* (London, 1996), 317, 327–32.

which is compatible with expectations that the End will occur 34–5 years later, in 6500 A.M. (992 A.D.). The marginal note recording the horoscope of Constantinople then marks the beginning of a later attempt, by a reader or even by the compiler himself, to bring the prophecies in line with changing expectations of an End one thousand years not from the Nativity but from the Passion and Resurrection of Christ. This readjustment is completed, apparently in the 980s, in the chronicle copied by Kedrenos, which not only incorporates the horoscope of Constantinople into its text, but extends the existence of Islam by the exact length of Christ's lifetime.⁴⁹

The reign of Nikephoros II Phokas (963–969) was a time of intense prophetic speculation in Constantinople, as we learn both from Liudprand of Cremona and from the satirical dialogue *Philopatris*.⁵⁰ One prophetic text from the period survives, and its predictions are fully compatible with expectations of a fairly imminent end of time. It envisages three further reigns, two of them lasting a total of ten and a half years, before that of the Last Emperor. Thus, for the unknown author, the End was decades rather than centuries away, and it is not surprising that the text was included in a mini-dossier of material intended to document the prediction of the End at the millennium of the Resurrection.⁵¹

Finally, it is surely significant that the surviving Byzantine visionary accounts of heaven and hell can all be dated to the late tenth or early eleventh century. That in the *Life of St Niphon*, as we have seen, explicitly announces the end in the middle of the seventh millennium. The *Vision of Kosmas the Monk* is dated to 934;⁵² the *Life of St Basil the Younger*, with its extended visions of heaven, hell, the Last Judgement and the fate of the soul after death, sets itself in the late

⁴⁹ Above, n. 45. That the chronicler was working very close to the predicted date is suggested, firstly, by the additional four-year extension which he proposes, and secondly, by his remark that 'There remains until . . ., if indeed the astrologer Stephen read the horoscope correctly, but I think he was out by a good degree'. Despite the lacuna, it is clear that the author of the remark was sceptical of the power of Islam collapsing in time to fulfil the forecast.

⁵⁰ *Liudprandi Cremonensis opera omnia*, ed. P. Chiesa, *Continuatio Mediaevalis* 156 (Turnhout, 1998), 204–5; *Philopatris*, ed. and trans. M.D. Macleod, in Lucian, *Works*, VIII, Loeb Classical Library (London-Cambridge, MA, 1967), pp. 415–465.

⁵¹ Magdalino, "Une prophétie inédite."

⁵² Chr. Angelidi, "La version longue de la vision du moine Cosmas", *AB* 101 (1983), 78–99.

tenth century;⁵³ the *Apocalypse of Anastasia* postdates, but probably not by much, the death of John Tzimiskes in 976.⁵⁴ As for the *Life of St Andrew the Fool*, which contains short visions of heaven and hell as well as a lengthy apocalypse, the weight of argument for a mid-tenth-century date continues to grow.⁵⁵

The expectation that the world would end in some version of the year 1000 was thus widely and firmly held. How and when did Byzantines arrive at it? Why did this terminus come to loom so large, and with what consequences?

Disagreement over the dating of the Incarnation—which continued in Byzantium until the tenth century—may always have been motivated by a degree of concern to fix the due date of its millennial anniversary. When Hesychios and Malalas, in the late fifth and early sixth centuries, revised the chronology of world history to place the Resurrection of Christ at the end of the sixth millennium from the Creation, they cannot have been unaware of the implications of timing the first Christian millennium to expire simultaneously with the seventh day of the cosmic week.⁵⁶ In this connection, it is worth noting that Malalas' chronology reached England in the seventh century, probably with Theodore of Tarsus, who has been identified as the most likely author of the so-called *Laterculus Malalianus*.⁵⁷ The *Laterculus* may have been known to Bede, whose chronological work was decisive in the western adoption of an A.D. dating system based on the Easter computations of Dionysius Exiguus.⁵⁸ But Malalas' revised chronology of world history did not catch on, either in the

⁵³ BHG 263–4; P. Magdalino, “‘What we heard in the Lives of the Saints we have heard with our own eyes’: the holy man as literary text in tenth-century Constantinople”, in J. Howard-Johnston and P.A. Hayward (eds.), *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1999), 83–112, at 89.

⁵⁴ Ed. R. Homburg, *Apocalypsis Anastasiae* (Leipzig, 1903); J. Baun, *Tales from another Byzantium* (Cambridge, forthcoming).

⁵⁵ BHG 1152; ed. and trans. L. Rydén, *The Life of St Andrew the Fool*. 2 vols (Uppsala, 1995); Magdalino, “Holy man as literary text”.

⁵⁶ *Chronographia*, ed. H. Thurn, CFHB 35 (Berlin/New York, 2000); trans. E. Jeffreys, M. Jeffreys, R. Scott et al. (Melbourne, 1986); cf. E. Jeffreys, “Malalas' use of the past”, in G.W. Clarke et al. (eds.), *Reading the Past in Late Antiquity* (Canberra, 1990), 121–46; eadem, “Chronological structures in the chronicle”, in E. Jeffreys, B. Croke, R. Scott (eds.), *Studies in John Malalas* (Sydney, 1990), 111–66.

⁵⁷ Ed. J. Stevenson, *The ‘Laterculus Malalianus’ and the School of Archbishop Theodore* (Cambridge, 1995).

⁵⁸ See Bede, *The Reckoning of Time*, intro., trans. and comm. F. Wallis (Liverpool, 1999), *passim*, esp. 361–2.

East or in the West, and in reading his catalogue of calamities in the reigns of Anastasius, Justin I and Justinian, it is hard to believe that he or his contemporaries really thought the world was going to last for another 500 years. Indeed, there are plenty of indications that throughout the sixth century and well into the seventh, Byzantines continued to live with the sense of 'apocalypse now' which had been aroused by the turn of the cosmic millennium. Computus dating did not disappear—one can see traces of it, for example, in the *Chronicon Paschale*, in the attention given to the completion in 562 of the first Paschal cycle since the Resurrection.⁵⁹ However, it was very short-term, and driven by reaction to events, as one can see in Romanos' hymn 'On the ten virgins',⁶⁰ and in the prophecies of an imminent End occasioned by the great war with Persia in the early seventh century.⁶¹ The first clear evidence of an attempt to set a new terminus by computus dating is to be found in the *Hexaemeron*, or homilies on the Creation, attributed to Anastasios of Sinai: here the first quarter-mark of the seventh millennium (6250 A.D. = 741–2/757–8 A.D.) is suggested as the most likely date.⁶² If the attribution is genuine, the prophecy was hardly long-term, since Anastasios lived in the late seventh century. It should probably be seen as part of the eschatological response to the rise of Islam, and especially to the building of the Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount, which was completed in 691–2, exactly 200 years into the seventh cosmic millennium,⁶³ and was obviously significant in the light of the belief

⁵⁹ Ed. L. Dindorf, 2 vols (Bonn, 1832), 685–7, trans. M. and M. Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale, 284–628 A.D.* (Liverpool, 1989), 134–6.

⁶⁰ Romanos, *Hymnes*, ed. J. Grosdidier de Matons, V, SC 283 (Paris, 1981), 272–327.

⁶¹ Cf. Magdalino, "History of the Future", 18–19.

⁶² Survives in a Latin translation: *PG*, 89, cols. 940–941; it is not clear whether the author is using the standard Byzantine or the Alexandrian system of *anno mundi* dating. The reasoning is that in the parable of the ten virgins Christ said he would come in the middle of the night (Matt. 25.6), which is the equivalent of one quarter of the way through the present cosmic day, i.e. A.M. 6250.; this is confirmed by the parable of the good and faithful servant, who will be awake at the second and third watch (Matt. 24.46–8, Luke 12.37, 38). However, the author concludes with a disclaimer: the proponents of this interpretation made it 'per conjecturam ad animi recreationem', not forgetting that 'Of that day and hour no man knows' (Matt. 24.36).

⁶³ Reinink, *Pseudo-Methodius*, II, xx–xxiii; J. Raby, J. Johns (eds), *Bayt al-Maqdis. Abd al-Malik's Jerusalem*, I (Oxford, 1992); A. Elad, *Medieval Jerusalem and Islamic Worship. Holy Places, Ceremonies, Pilgrimage* (Leiden-New York-Cologne, 1995), 159–63; S. Nuseibeh, O. Grabar, *The Dome of the Rock* (New York, 1996).

that Antichrist would rebuild the Jewish Temple.⁶⁴ The dating of the end to the mid eighth century more or less fits the time-scale envisaged by the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, whose composition has been dated to 692.⁶⁵

The year 691–2 is therefore a terminus post quem for the adoption of A.M. 6500 as a deadline for the Second Coming, and indeed the earliest propositions of this deadline are contained in texts which appear to date from the early eighth century: they are the prophecy in the liturgical commentary attributed to the Patriarch Germanos I (715–30) (Appendix, no. 1) and the treatise of Theophanios the Monk, whose calculations point to 710 as the year of composition (no. 2). There are problems with both texts—the *Historia Ecclesiastica* may not be by Germanos, and the argument for 6500 may be a later addition to the text of Theophanios, most of which supports an earlier terminus of 6384/6388 A.M.—but the problems are not convincingly solved by alternative hypotheses. An early eighth-century date makes sense for three reasons: first, it is exactly contemporary with Bede's adoption of an A.D. dating system according to the computation of Dionysius Exiguus; second, the setting of an end date some three hundred years in the future had a precedent in the adoption of the 6000 A.M. terminus by Julius Africanus and Hippolytus in the early third century; third, the imminence of the 6250 A.M. deadline espoused by Anastasios of Sinai increased the pressure for attention to shift to the next quarter division of the current cosmic millennium.

First, however, at least one other major hurdle had to be negotiated. This was the possible terminus of 6384/6388 A.M., corresponding to 876/880 A.D., discussed by Theophanios and recorded in the early tenth century by Niketas the Paphlagonian, although by his time it was clearly redundant. A.M. 6384 was significant because it marked the completion of twelve cycles of 532 years from the Creation; A.M. 6388 was significant because it was 888 years from the Incarnation, and 888 was the gematric value of the name Jesus (Ἰησοῦς). There is reason to believe that the near coincidence of these dates was taken very seriously. After the high apocalyptic expectations of the sixth and seventh centuries, it would have seemed

⁶⁴ Alexander, *Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, 204–6.

⁶⁵ Reinink, *Pseudo-Methodius*, II, xii–xxix.

presumptuous, and gone against the grain of traditional Christian thinking, to feel suddenly confident that the end had been delayed by up to three centuries. In the original version of the horoscope of Islam attributed to Stephen of Alexandria, but composed c. 775, the Islamic hegemony is allotted a life-span of 200 years from 621;⁶⁶ according to the apocalyptic schema introduced by Pseudo-Methodius, this meant that the Last Things were believed to fall due within decades rather than centuries of 821. More than one Byzantine apocalyptic text dates, as it stands, from the ninth century.⁶⁷ Basil I, the emperor in the dreaded years 876 and 880, showed symptoms of apocalyptic behaviour in his devotion to the Prophet Elijah and in his effort to convert the Jews. Finally, it is surely significant that both Theophanios and Niketas the Paphlagonian present the 6500 date in terms of an extension of 120 years which Christ has granted to the life of the world, although it is clear that, since the addition of 120 to either of the previous terminal dates does not produce a round total of 6500, but comes to either 6504 or 6508, the figure of 120 must have been chosen for some other reason. This is not entirely obvious, but the arithmetic suggests plausible explanations. In the case of 6504 the addition continues to produce a multiple of twelve; in the case of 6508, it makes the Byzantine deadline coincide with the western 1000 A.D.

This adoption of 6500+/- as a 'fall-back' date helps to explain why it became so prominent: such a generous remission could not be expected a second time. Another part of the explanation no doubt lies in the quest for a round number: with the end of the seventh millennium so far away, the middle of the millennium was the next best thing, and the parable of the ten virgins could be redeployed in support of it.⁶⁸ But a main attraction of dating the end to 6500 or 6533 seems to have been the obvious one: it was one thousand years from the Incarnation or Resurrection, and could therefore be justified with reference to the Apocalypse of St John and his vision of a thousand-year time during which Satan will be bound and the saints will reign with Christ (Rev. 20.1-7). This justification is used by one proponent of the 6500 date (1a), and the four proponents of the 6533 date: the anonymous reviser of the anonymous treatise

⁶⁶ Ed. Usener (above, n. 43), 286-7, 260.

⁶⁷ Alexander, *Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, chapter 3.

⁶⁸ Appendix, nos. 1a-b.

(1b); Niketas the Paphlagonian (6); Anthimos the *chartophylax* (probably 959) (8); Basil of Neopatras (4); and the anonymous author of 995 announcing the birth of Antichrist in 992 (7). As we have already observed, Niketas, Anthimos and Basil were all respectable members of the religious establishment.

This appeal to the authority of Revelation may come as a surprise in view of the marginal status which the book is supposed to have held in the Byzantine scriptural canon. It was not used in liturgical readings, the main Greek Fathers hardly cite it, and only three Greek commentaries are preserved, none of them earlier than the fifth century or later than the tenth. The text of Revelation was neither illustrated nor a direct source of religious iconography.

The use of one specific motif from Revelation by a few tenth-century eschatologists does not prove that the book was widely read or regarded as authoritative; one of the eschatologists in question, Basil of Neopatras, reveals a highly superficial and inaccurate knowledge of the text. Yet it is possible that the influence of Revelation, and of its Greek commentators, on Byzantine eschatological thought has been seriously underrated.⁶⁹ Revelation was important because it gave New Testament, apostolic validation to Old Testament prophecies, notably from Daniel and Ezechiel, which had not yet been fulfilled. The two principal commentaries, those of Oikoumenios and Andrew of Caesarea, date respectively from the late fifth-early sixth century and the late sixth-early seventh century. It is thus quite likely that they were prompted by concern about the relevance of Revelation to the passing of the sixth millennium, and in particular to the question whether the seventh millennium would be a messianic age of earthly peace and prosperity, something that Hippolytus had not denied in his influential commentary on Daniel.⁷⁰ Oikoumenios and Andrew both strongly defend the authority of Revelation and categorically deny that the millennium of Revelation will be a future period of earthly repose. The explanation offered by Oikoumenios, that the reign of Christ and the saints corresponded to Christ's earthly life, does not seem to have enjoyed much success, perhaps not surprisingly given the great elasticity with which Oikoumenios treats the biblical numbers, cramming the millennium foretold for the binding of Satan into thirty-three historical years, while at the same time

⁶⁹ See in general Podskalsky, *Reichseschatologie*, 77ff.

⁷⁰ IV.23: ed. M. Lefèvre, SC 14 (Paris, 1947), 306-7.

stretching the three and a half-year reign of Antichrist to cover the 350 and more years from Christ's Ascension to some indeterminate future date.⁷¹ However, the solution put forward by Andrew of Caesarea, that the thousand years are the period from the Incarnation to the reign of Antichrist, fell on fertile ground.⁷² This was clearly the interpretation assumed by the tenth-century eschatologists who cited Revelation. The approval given to Andrew's commentary is evident in the large number of manuscripts on which the printed edition is based, and in the fact that the last Greek commentator on Revelation, Arethas of Caesarea (early tenth century) reproduced it almost entirely.⁷³ Andrew's interpretation may have been influenced by that of St Augustine and Tyconius, with which it is essentially identical,⁷⁴ and it certainly brought Byzantine thinking on the apocalyptic millennium in line with the view prevailing in the western church. Unlike Oikoumenios' interpretation, it made more sense, not less, with every century that passed from the sixth to the eleventh. Most importantly, it was the interpretation of the controversial prophecy that was most compatible with the political ideology of the Byzantine Empire, and in particular with the idea that equated the empire not with the fourth and last in the succession of world empires foretold in the Book of Daniel, but with the heavenly kingdom which would supersede the rise and fall of earthly realms.⁷⁵

Andrew is careful not to encourage a literal reading of the thousand years, insisting that a thousand symbolises either a very large number or perfection, but he ends by leaving it open, 'whether the said thousand years are as we have understood, or ten times a hundred, or less than that, is known to God alone'.⁷⁶ As proof that the notional millennium is under way, he points to the cult of the saints and the miracles they perform.

⁷¹ Ed. H.C. Hoskier, *The Complete Commentary of Oecumenius on the Apocalypse* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1928), 215–6.

⁷² Ed. J. Schmid, *Studien zur Geschichte des griechischen Apokalypse-Textes*, I (Munich, 1955–6), part 2, pp. 215–6, 221–2 (where Andrew rejects Oikoumenios' interpretation).

⁷³ PG 106, cols. 493–786.

⁷⁴ Cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, 20.7–9; Landes, "The Fear of an Apocalyptic Year", 105 and literature cited. The similarity was noted by Schmid, I, 2, p. 216, but not by Podskalsky, *Reichseschatologie*, 86–8.

⁷⁵ Podskalsky, *Reichseschatologie*, 14–15, 17–18, 38–9; Magdalino, "History of the Future", 10–11, 25.

⁷⁶ Ed. Schmid, 216.

They have the power to judge, through which they judge demons even until now, as we can see. They are glorified with Christ until the consummation of the present age, revered by pious emperors and faithful rulers, and they manifest their God-given strength against every kind of bodily disease...⁷⁷

... For their gifts and miracles which are seen now through experience and the outcome of events were still to come then, when they were beheld by the Evangelist.⁷⁸

The cult of the saints was central to Byzantine religious Orthodoxy. Andrew's commentary shows that the cult had a profoundly eschatological dimension, not only in invoking the intercession of the saints, but also in providing the guarantee that the regime under which Christians were living was the kingdom of Christ and the saints.

The remark that the saints are revered (*προσκυνούμενοι*) by emperors and rulers, asserts, discreetly but unmistakably, their superiority to the contemporary power structure on earth, and this is consistent with Andrew's overall tendency, which he shares with St Augustine, not to sacralise the empire. He basically follows early Christian tradition in regarding the earthly empire as the persecuting adversary; he makes no distinction between the Christian empire and its pagan predecessor; he is ready to believe that Constantinople has taken over from Rome the role of Babylon the Great, and that Antichrist will come in the form of a Roman emperor. Yet the very fact of placing the reign of Christ and the saints in contemporary relationship with the Christian Empire of pious emperors invited assimilation of the one to the other. It is a truism that the Byzantines envisaged their empire as the Kingdom of Heaven on earth and the emperor as God's deputy, but it is not appreciated that they did so in terms which precisely echoed the 'constitution' of the millennial regime of Revelation. The two key features of this regime are (a) that the saints co-reign (*συμβασιλεύουσι*) with Christ, and (b) that they reign as priests. Both motifs are basic concepts in the sacral identity of the Byzantine emperor as this developed in the seventh to tenth centuries.

The idea of co-rule between the emperor and Christ is expressed by two churchmen from this period: a homilist who is either Anastasios of Sinai or a ninth-century cleric using his name, and Basil of Neoplatras, writing in the tenth century. According to 'Anastasios',

⁷⁷ Ibid., 218.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 221.

Christ entrusts the empire to faithful emperors and ‘co-reigns with them’ (συμβασιλεύει αὐτοῖς).⁷⁹ Basil, without mentioning emperors, says the same thing about the Christian empire:

(Christ’s) is the universal kingdom from the beginning unto the ages. So too the worldly empire of the Ausonians, which is above all others from the moment of his coming, since at the time of the Caesar Augustus he made the whole world subject to its census, will be his, unmoved until the consummation of the world. And indeed for the future, it is to be believed that the people of Christ’s calling will be reigning with him.⁸⁰

Neither ‘Anastasios’ nor Basil refers explicitly to Revelation. However, Basil refers to the passage of Daniel on which the prophecy of the reign of the saints is based:

The four beasts are the Babylonians, the Persians, the Hellenes and Macedonians, and the Romans before Christ, who have come and gone, ceased and been abolished with the coming of Christ. For through him the sole hegemony and the kingdom of God is given to the saints of the highest, that is to the Romans who are of sound faith in Christianity.⁸¹

‘Anastasios’ alludes fairly unmistakably to Revelation in the context of explaining that the Christian Roman Empire will endure until the end of time. The kingdoms of the Babylonians, Medes, Persians and Macedonians have all passed away,

but the empire of the Romans, or rather of the Christians, since it is co-ruled (συμβασιλευομένη) by Our Lord Jesus Christ, will not pass away until the consummation of the present age, but through it he shepherds his people as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, until his Second Coming, which will not be left for any other people.⁸²

⁷⁹ PG 89, col. 1212 B.

⁸⁰ Patmiacus 31, fol. 255v. καὶ αὐτῷ ἔσται ἡ βασιλεία ἡ παντοκρατορικὴ ὡς ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς καὶ εἰς αἰῶνας· ἔτι δὲ καὶ ἡ κοσμικὴ βασιλεία ἡ ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν ἡ Αὐσονίων ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς τῆς ἐλεύσεως αὐτοῦ, ἀφοῦ εἰς Καίσαρα Αὐγουστον ἐνυπόγραφον τὸν πάντα κόσμον ταῦτη πεποίηκεν, αὐτῷ ἔσται, ἄχρι συντελείας ἀμετάθετος οὐδα· ἀλλὰ διὰ καὶ τῷ μέλλοντι πιστευτέον ὅτι σὺν αὐτῷ τῷ Χριστῷ καὶ Θεῷ ἔσεται ἡ χριστῶνυμος κλήσις συνανάσσουσα αὐτῷ.

⁸¹ Patmiacus 31, fol. 256r: Τὰ θηρία τὰ τέσσαρα Βαβυλώνιοι, Πέρσαι, Ἑλλήνες, Μακεδόνες καὶ οἱ πρὸ Χριστοῦ Ῥωμαῖοι εἰσὶν, οἳ καὶ ἤρθησαν καὶ ὥχηκαν καὶ ἐπάθθησαν καὶ ἤρρησαν Χριστοῦ ἐκλυθότος· δι’ αὐτοῦ γὰρ τὸ μονοκρατὲς κράτος καὶ ἡ ἐκ Θεοῦ βασιλεία ἐδόθη ἀγίοις ὑψίστου, τοῖς ἐν τῇ χριστωνυμίᾳ Ῥωμαῖοις στοιχήσασιν ἀσφαλῆ ἐν τῇ πίστει.

⁸² PG 89, col. 1212 C.

The expression 'King of Kings and Lord of Lords' is taken from a passage of St Paul referring to Christ's future Epiphany (1. Tim. 6.15), and it is almost identical with the wording in two verses of Revelation (17.14, 19.16). That 'Anastasios' was not alone in applying it to the association of the Roman Empire and Christ's kingdom is clear from its use in the imperial coinage. About 692, the emperor Justinian II issued a new gold coin with a radically new design, which moved the imperial portrait to the reverse side and replaced it on the obverse with the icon of Christ Pantokrator. The emperor's image is accompanied by the inscription *servus Christi* and the icon of Christ by the legend *rex regnantium*, the Latin equivalent of βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλευόντων.⁸³ It is hard to imagine a more clear, official and public statement of the doctrine of *symbasileia*. The apocalyptic connotations of the biblical quotation have been ignored by modern scholars, but they would not have been lost on the Christian contemporaries of Anastasios of Sinai around the year 692—the year not only of the Council in Trullo, but also of the building of the Dome of the Rock, and, probably, the composition of the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, whose prophecy of the last emperor may well have been formulated with Justinian II in mind.⁸⁴

Justinian II was a controversial emperor, and his immediate successors did not depict Christ on their coins—whether the long-haired, full-bearded Christ of his first reign, or the youthful Christ with short hair and beard of his second reign. The use of icons on the coins of Justinian II may well have been instrumental in pushing Leo III into iconoclasm. However, both the icon of Christ and the *rex regnantium* inscription were restored to the coinage after the restoration of icon veneration under Michael III in 843.

Byzantine imperial ideology also clearly echoed the idea that the saints will co-reign as priests of God and Christ, or, as Andrew of Caesarea tellingly puts it, 'they officiate and reign, as we can see, with Christ'.⁸⁵ The sacral character of Byzantine imperial rule, the close association between church and state, often misleadingly referred to as caesaropapism, is best understood, as Gilbert Dagron has brilliantly demonstrated, in terms of an attempt to invest the imperial

⁸³ J.D. Breckenridge, *The Numismatic Iconography of Justinian II* (New York, 1959).

⁸⁴ Möhring, *Weltkaiser*, 82–8.

⁸⁵ ἱερατεῦνσι καὶ βασιλεύουσιν, ὡς ὁρῶμεν, μετὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

office with a quasi-priestly function.⁸⁶ The apocalyptic dimension of this function is one that Dagron does not fully explore, yet the priestly king is clearly the exact complement of the reigning saint. The designation of the emperor as 'holy', the canonization of Constantine the Great, and the attempt to have the emperor recognised as king and priest after the order of Melchisedek: all these familiar motifs examined by Dagron take on extra relevance in the light of the millennial reign of the saints. All come clearly into focus in the seventh century, when the Augustinian interpretation of the millennial kingdom, as formulated by Andrew of Caesarea, became accepted in the Greek world.

Altogether, there is much to support the idea that the Augustinian interpretation of Revelation 20.1–7 formed the basis of Byzantine imperial eschatology by the beginning of the eighth century, the apparent date of the earliest texts which predict the end of the world in the year 6500 A.M. That neither of these texts cites the authority of Revelation is probably due less to doubts over the canonical status of the book than to the Church's deep reluctance, reflected in the commentaries of Augustine and Andrew of Caesarea, to presume a literal reading of the thousand-year prophecy. Churchmen may also have played down the argument from Revelation 20 precisely because it diminished the other argument, that 6500 was a gracious extension of the natural deadline. That the authority of Revelation does become cited in the tenth century reflects the extent to which the literal reading now seemed the most sensible, after the passing of the late ninth-century terminus left the millennial anniversaries of Christ's earthly birth and death as the only imminent deadlines on the horizon.

Demonstrating that the Byzantines expected, or half-expected, the world to end around the year 1000 A.D. is the easy part of the exercise. The hard part is to demonstrate what effect it had on their lives or their actions, because having argued that medieval Christians were forever expecting the end of the world and always shifting the deadline, it becomes all the more difficult to explain why one due date should have elicited more of a response than any other. The justification for regarding the year 1000 as special is twofold. On the one hand, as we have seen, the date generated unusual expectancy:

⁸⁶ G. Dagron, *Empereur et prêtre. Étude sur le 'césaropapisme' byzantin* (Paris, 1996).

Not only is the 6500 terminus better documented than any other, but it is the only one presented as an act of divine mercy, whereby Christ gave the world 120 years to prepare for his return. On the other hand, the Byzantine tenth century was unique in ways which can plausibly be interpreted in terms of an attempt to make the most of the heaven-sent remission, and the century culminated in the reign of an extraordinary emperor whose idiosyncratic cultural patronage and lifestyle make more sense, not less, when it is noted that he lived through the first great millennial year of 991–2, and died shortly before the second in 1025.

The tenth century saw an expansion of the empire in the east, which made the reconquest of the Holy Land a possibility, at least for propaganda purposes. The war against the Muslims was fuelled by a religious ideology which gave new emphasis to the identification of the empire with the kingship of Christ, through an unprecedented cult of the physical remains of Christ's early existence. As Jerusalem came within range of Byzantine military operations, the role of Constantinople as a New Jerusalem was enhanced by the conspicuous concentration of the movable relics of Christ's life and Passion, not just within the city, but within the imperial Palace.⁸⁷ Relics which had already been translated from Jerusalem were venerated in the main Palace chapel, the church of the Virgin of the Pharos, while a series of new acquisitions, trophies of the victorious eastern campaigns, were deposited either in the Pharos church or in the church of Christ at the Chalke gate of the Palace, built by Romanos I Lekapenos (920–44), and enlarged by his kinsman John I Tzimiskes (969–76).⁸⁸ Tzimiskes advertised his eastern campaign of 975 as a crusade in which he acquired holy relics, visited pilgrimage sites in the Holy Land, 'intent on delivering the Holy Sepulchre of Christ from the bondage of the Muslims', and came close to liberating the whole of the Near East.⁸⁹ Tzimiskes, too, introduced a copper coin bearing only the icon of Christ and the inscription 'Jesus Christ King of Kings', which reproduced the exact wording of Revelation 17.14,

⁸⁷ See B. Flusin, 'Les reliques de la Sainte-Chapelle et leur passé impérial à Constantinople', in *Le trésor de la Sainte-Chapelle* (Paris, 2001), 20–31, and J. Durand, B. Flusin (eds.), *Les reliques de la Passion*, esp. contributions by S. Engberg, P. Magdalino, C. Mango.

⁸⁸ *Patria*, ed. Th. Preger, *Scriptores originum Constantinopolitanarum*, 2 vols (Leipzig, 1901, 1907; repr. Leipzig, 1991), II, 145, 232, 282–3

⁸⁹ Letter to Ashot III of Armenia, in Matt. Ed., 1.19–20, pp. 29–33.

19.16 (βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλέων) rather than the variant (τῶν βασιλευόντων) in St Paul's Epistle (1. Tim. 6.15).⁹⁰

The tenth century was also marked by the cultural enterprise known as the 'Macedonian Renaissance'. Whether this is defined in terms of encyclopedism, or of codification, or of a series of pedagogical dossiers, or generally of a *cultura della συλλογή*, the enterprise was a programmatic effort at the highest official level to create a *summa* of all that was considered worth retrieving from the ancient and recent past.⁹¹ In its final phase, it concentrated particularly on the recording of ritual, the editing of hagiography, the acquisition of holy relics from the east which had not yet been translated to Constantinople, and the collection of traditions—including eschatological prophecies—about the monuments of Constantinople. This last phase began in the personal reign of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, and coincided largely with the ascendancy of the emperor's illegitimate brother-in-law, Basil the *parakoimomenos*, a munificent religious patron who seems to have been behind the composition of the two saints' *Lives*, those of Andrew the Fool and Basil the Younger, which contain long apocalyptic prophecies. Seen in the context of the approach of the millennium, the cultural enterprise of the 'Macedonian Renaissance' can plausibly be explained as an effort to put the imperial house in order for the reception of the King of Kings. Order (τάξις/εὐταξία), as an ideal quality to be imitated from the heavenly model, is the key concept in several texts of Leo VI and Constantine Porphyrogenitus. If the *summa* of the 'Macedonian Renaissance' is taken as beginning with the *Bibliotheca* of Photios, its duration corresponded quite closely to the 120-year extension period from the terminal date of 876/880. It was all but complete by the time the year 6500 A.M. arrived in 992 A.D. Nothing like this work of sum-

⁹⁰ See P. Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, III, part 2: *Basil I to Nicephorus III (867–1081)* (Washington, DC, 1973), 634ff.

⁹¹ See P. Lemerle, trans. A. Moffatt, *Byzantine Humanism*, Byzantina Australiensia 3 (Canberra, 1986), 309–46; P. Magdalino, "The Non-Juridical Legislation of Leo VI", in Sp. Troianos (ed.), *Analekta Atheniensia ad Ius Byzantinum Spectantia*, I, Forschungen zur byzantinischen Rechtsgeschichte 10 (Athens-Komotini, 1997), 169–82; P. Speck et al., *Varia III* (Bonn, 1991), passim, esp. 267, 269–306, 326–7; P. Odorico, "La cultura della Συλλογή. 1) Il cosiddetto enciclopedismo bizantino. 2) Le tavole del sapere del Giovanni Damasceno", *BZ* 83 (1990), 1–21; P. Magdalino, "The Distance of the Past in Early Medieval Byzantium (VII–X Centuries)", *Ideologie e pratiche del reimpiego nell' Alto Medioevo. Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull' Alto Medioevo* 46 (1999), 115–46.

mation was ever attempted again, and no attempt was made to update it. The literary culture of the eleventh century, which takes off in the 1040s with Mauropous, Psellos, and the founding of the 'university' by Constantine IX Monomachos, has a very different character.

The long gap of almost half a century which separated this new eleventh-century wave from the 'encyclopedic' culture of the tenth century lacks a clear-cut cultural identity. It is easy to disregard as a transitional void, especially since it largely coincided with the mature reign of Basil II, of whom Psellos wrote that he had no time for men of learning and that rhetoric and philosophy flourished in spite of him.⁹² Indeed, little rhetoric and no philosophy survive from Basil's reign. However, it is clear that Psellos' portrait of Basil the hard-nosed, no-nonsense, parsimonious emperor is highly idealised.⁹³ To set against it, we have the evidence of Basil II's religious foundations, to be discussed later, and the lavishly illustrated manuscripts which were produced for him, the famous Psalter and Menologion.⁹⁴ There is also evidence that Basil's reign was a good time for history writing, astrology and astronomy. The cultural production in all these apparently unrelated areas can be related to official preoccupation with the millennium.

The Menologion, or, more accurately, Synaxarion of Basil II related to the millennium in two ways. Firstly, the metrical preface and the now lost frontispiece illustration which this originally accompanied, not only affirmed the co-rulership of God, lord of heaven, with the emperor, ruler of the world; the text invokes the saints and angels depicted throughout the book to assist the emperor in wielding power and to intercede for him on Judgement Day.⁹⁵ The association between the emperor and the saints is also underlined in the frontispiece illustrations to Basil II's Psalter (Marc. gr. z. 17). Secondly, the Synaxarion, like the Menologion of Symeon Metaphrastes, also completed in Basil's reign,⁹⁶ was in its very conception as a complete book of

⁹² Psellos, I, 18–19; see M. Lauxtermann, in this volume

⁹³ See A. Kaldellis, *The Argument of Psellos' Chronographia* (Leiden-Boston-Cologne, 1999), and Catherine Holmes, in this volume

⁹⁴ See I. Ševčenko, "The Illuminators of the Menologium of Basil II", *DOP* 16 (1962), 245–76; A. Cutler, 'The Psalter of Basil II', in *Imagery and Ideology in Byzantine Art* (Aldershot, 1992), III (repr. from *Arte Veneta* 30 [1976], 9–19; 31 [1977], 9–15).

⁹⁵ *SynCP*, xxv–xxvi, trans. Ševčenko, "Illuminators", 272–3.

⁹⁶ See Christian Høgel in this volume.

saints, eschatologically charged by the traditional belief that the *syn-teleia* would take place once all the vacancies in heaven had been filled to replace the fallen angels who had revolted with Satan. This belief is clearly stated by Anastasios of Sinai in one of his *Quaestiones*;⁹⁷ we also find it in the first Ethical Oration of Symeon the New Theologian, who was writing under Basil II.⁹⁸ Although Symeon presents the population of the ‘upper world’ as still in the process of being replenished, this surely had much to do with his controversial effort to canonise his spiritual father Symeon the Studite.⁹⁹ The prevailing view, and the official line, seems rather to have been closer to the assumption which Symeon attacked, and which is echoed in contemporary hagiography, that no man of the present age could equal the saints of old.¹⁰⁰ The belief that the communion of saints is fully complete is implicit in the metaphor which dominates the preface to the Menologion of Basil II.¹⁰¹ The holy icons of heavenly figures which illuminate the book are likened to the lights that stud the heaven which God has stretched out like a parchment skin (Ps. 103.2: ἐκτείνων τὸν οὐρανὸν ὥσπερ δέρριν). The implication is partly that the saints are as complete in number as the stars of heaven, and partly that what is unrolled will be rolled up when the book is finished—exactly as envisaged in Revelation 6.14 (καὶ ὁ οὐρανὸς ἀπεχωρίσθη ὡς βιβλίον ἐλισσόμενον), and in numerous Byzantine depictions of the Last Judgement. In the preview of the Last Judgement

⁹⁷ PG 89, col. 789; cf. also Cosmas Indicopleustes, *Topographie chrétienne*, 5.255, ed. W. Wolska-Conus, II, SC 159 (Paris, 1970), 371, for the different formulation that the number of men has to equal that of the angels. The authority for such ideas is not clear; although Anastasios cites Gregory of Nazianzos (Δεῖ πληρωθῆναι τὸν ἄνω κόσμον, ὡς καὶ Γρηγόριος βοᾷ), the passage in question is hardly explicit: *Oration* 38, ed. C. Moreschini, trans. P. Gallay, SC 358 [Paris, 1990], 107. The closest parallel in Patristic literature appears to be in St Augustine: *Encheiridion*, 9.29, and *De civitate Dei*, 22.1, 14, 23. The ultimate source of the idea may be Rev. 6.11, where the martyrs are told to wait for recompense until their number is complete; see below, n.

⁹⁸ *Traité théologiques et éthiques*, ed. J. Darrouzès, SC 122 (Paris, 1966), 220, 236, 240.

⁹⁹ See the *Life of Symeon* by Niketas Stethatos (*BHG* 1692), ed. I. Hausherr, Orientalia Christiana (Rome, 1928), 98–129.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*; Magdalino, “Holy man as literary text”, *passim*, esp. 102–7. In the *Life of Niphon*, one of the texts predicting the end of the world in the middle of the seventh millennium (see below, Appendix, no. 5), the supposedly 4th-c. saint predicts that in the last days righteous men will not make themselves known by signs and wonders: ed. Rystenkov, § 138, p. 160.

¹⁰¹ Ed. Delchaye; trans. Ševčenko.

described in the late tenth-century *Life of St Basil the Younger*, the narrator sees all the stars perish, because, he explains, the saints take their place.¹⁰²

The stars have a significant part in the two works of history which were written under Basil II, and which we have already cited as indirect evidence for expectations of the End in the early eleventh century. The anonymous chronicle, datable to the 980s, which is transmitted by Kedrenos,¹⁰³ cannot be proved to have had official sponsorship, although this seems likely in view of its close attention to chronology and its evident concern to promote a different computation of leading world dates from those currently on offer. Thus it argues that Christ was born in 5506 A.M., crucified and resurrected in 5539.¹⁰⁴ Given the chronicle's inclusion of invented horoscopes which provided precise dates for two significant apocalyptic events, the destruction of Islam and the destruction of Constantinople, it seems quite likely that the chronicler's tinkering with the dates of Christ's life on earth was motivated by concern to fine-tune the millennial anniversaries of the Nativity and, more particularly, the Resurrection. The conventional Byzantine date for the millennium of the Resurrection was A.M. 6533 or 1025 A.D., but the horoscope of Constantinople given by Kedrenos predicted the destruction of

¹⁰² BHG263, ed. A.N. Veselovskij, in *SbornikOtdela russkogoazyka i slovesnosti Imperatorskoj akademii nauk* 53 (St Petersburg, 1891), 6 suppl., 47.

¹⁰³ Kedrenos made no attempt to edit, update or comment on the astrological prophecies attributed to Valens and Stephen of Alexandria, although these were clearly redundant by the early 12th century, and later 12th-c. chroniclers only mention the horoscope of Constantinople by 'Valens' in order to make its manifest error serve their own agenda: John Zonaras, *Epitomae historianum*, III, ed. Th. Büttner-Wobst, CSHB (Bonn, 1897), 13–15; Michael Glykas, *Annales*, ed. I. Bekker, CSHB (Bonn, 1836), 463; cf. R. Macrides in P. Magdalino (ed.), *The Perception of the Past in Twelfth-Century Europe* (London, 1992), 128–9, 135–6. It thus seems likely that Kedrenos simply reproduced his 10th-c. source for the period up to 811, just as he reproduced the text of Skylitzes for the period 811–1081. For the 980s dating, see above; for Kedrenos and his source in relation to other Byzantine chronicles, see H. Gelzer, *Sextus Julius Africanus und die byzantinische Chronographie*, II (Leipzig, 1885), 357–84; K. Praechter, "Quellenkritische Studien zu Kedrenos", *Sitzungsberichte der königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-philologischen und historischen Klasse*, 1897, 2 (Munich, 1898), 3–107.

¹⁰⁴ Kedrenos, ed. Bekker, 7, 304–8. In this Kedrenos and his source differ significantly from the chronicle of Pseudo-Symeon, which in most respects is close to them, but gives the standard date of 5500 for the Nativity: Par.gr. 1212, fol. 60r–v. Kedrenos also differs slightly but consistently from the *Chronicon Paschale*, which he otherwise follows quite closely, but which gives dates of 5507 and 5540 for the Nativity and Resurrection respectively

the city in A.M. 6534 or 1026 A.D. The end of Constantinople could hardly postdate the end of the world, and might even predate it by a few years, according to the scenario envisaged by more than one Byzantine apocalypse.¹⁰⁵ The dating of the Resurrection to A.M. 5539, and consequent projection of the millennial anniversary to 6539 (1031 A.D.), provides for just such an interval.¹⁰⁶ Thus the anonymous chronicler copied by Kedrenos brings the millennium in line with the 'horoscope of Valens', and, as we shall see, this is not the only astrological prescription to which he makes it conform.

Leo the Deacon had been a cleric in imperial service,¹⁰⁷ so his history of the period 959–976 may not have been unconnected with his former employment.¹⁰⁸ Leo and the anonymous chronicler are certainly exceptional among Byzantine historians in their explicit concern with the end of history, which suggests that the concern was official and public and part of their purpose in writing. They are also unique in the credence they give to celestial signs and portents. Although the astrological predictions reported by the chronicle are pure fiction, they seem to indicate a faith in the validity of astrological forecasts. Leo the Deacon piously rejects the scientific explanation for earthquakes given by experts whom he calls *mathematikoi*, a standard term for astrologers,¹⁰⁹ but he records various celestial omens without any expression of disbelief or disapproval: the comet which, 'it is said', announced the birth and death of Constantine Porphyrogenitus;¹¹⁰ the comet of 975 which presaged 'civil wars, invasions, plagues, famines, frightful earthquakes and the near destruction of the empire' in the early years of Basil II's reign;¹¹¹ strange stars which appeared in the following decade, heralding the fall of Basil the *parakoimomenos* in 985, the emperor's defeat by the Bulgarians

¹⁰⁵ See K. Berger, *Die griechische Daniel-Diegesse* (Leiden, 1976), 15–18 (submersion of Constantinople, transfer of imperial power to Rome, followed by the reign of Dan and the 3-year reign of Antichrist); *Life of Andrew the Fool*, ed. Rydén, 274–85 (submersion of Constantinople, transfer of imperial power to Rome, Syllaion and Thessalonica; terrorisation of the earth by the 'unclean peoples for 660 days', reign of Antichrist).

¹⁰⁶ Five years seems to fit the sequence of 'Last Things' described in the apocalypse of the *Life of Andrew the Fool* (see previous note), which was certainly read if not produced in the 10th c.

¹⁰⁷ Leo. Diac., 173.

¹⁰⁸ See, however, A. Markopoulos, in this volume, n. 40.

¹⁰⁹ Leo. Diac., 68.

¹¹⁰ Leo. Diac., 5.

¹¹¹ Leo. Diac., 168.

in 986, the Rus capture of Cherson, the Bulgarian capture of Berroia, and the earthquake of 989 which brought down the dome of Hagia Sophia.¹¹² With regard to the comet of 975, Leo blames the two wise experts consulted by John I Tzimiskes for flattering the emperor with an optimistic misinterpretation, rather than interpreting the evidence as their art (τέχνη) required. These experts who should have known better, 'being of all the learned men at that time the most distinguished', were none other than Symeon the Logothete, usually identified with the compiler of the Metaphrastic corpus, and Stephen, Metropolitan of Nikomedia, who as patriarchal *synkellos* was later to become the adversary of Symeon the New Theologian over the canonization of Symeon the Studite.¹¹³

The cult of saints, the writing of history, and the reading of the stars were thus all official and all interconnected in the crucial decades at the end of the tenth century. This prompts the thought that the considerable evidence for astrological and astronomical activity in the reign of Basil II is due not merely to fortuitous survival or unofficial private enterprise, but reflects an official concern both with the exact chronology of forthcoming Easter cycles and millennial years, and with the exact timing and meaning of upcoming planetary conjunctions which might be associated with cosmic destruction. There is a remarkably dense cluster of horoscopes from Basil's reign: they date from 972, 977, 984, 989, 1002, 1003, 1006, 1007, 1009 and 1011.¹¹⁴ Two of these were of public interest: that of 989 concerns the earthquake of that year;¹¹⁵ one of 1007 refers to the capture of Servia by the emperor.¹¹⁶ From 996 we have a Chaldaean-style *dodekaeteris*, a forecast of weather and crop conditions over a cycle of twelve years, each belonging to a sign of the Zodiac, starting with Aries. The title is revealing:

¹¹² Leo. Diac., 172–6.

¹¹³ Leo. Diac., 168–9; cf. Niketas Stethatos, *Vie de Syméon*, ed. Hausherr, 98–129; M. Lauxtermann and C. Högel in this volume.

¹¹⁴ See CCAG, VIII, 1, 253–5; *Albumasaris De revolutionibus Nativitatum* ed. D. Pingree (Leipzig, 1968), p. viii, n. 3; *Hephaestionis Thebani Apotelesmaticorum epitomae quattuor*, ed. D. Pingree (Leipzig, 1974), II, pp. v–xxii; D. Pingree, "The Horoscope of Constantinople", in Y. Maeyama and W.G. Salzer (eds.), *Πρίσματα. Festschrift für Willy Hartner* (Wiesbaden, 1977), 305–15, esp. 310–11.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ *Hephaestionis*, ed. Pingree, p. xxii.

Accurate twelve-year cycle of the year 6504. This is year 1, and [it is] year 1 again in the 16th year [of the century], and year 1 on the completion of [every] twelve years, and it proceeds accordingly until the fulfilment of the world.¹¹⁷

6504 is indeed divisible by 12, so the end of the cycle in that year (presumably with the setting of Pisces in March 996 A.D.) marks the completion of 542 twelve-year cycles since the Creation. 6504/995–6 also marks two further significant totals. Firstly, it is the date which is reached when the 120 years of remission granted by Christ, according to Theophanios (see Appendix), are added to the significant computus terminal of 6384; secondly, it happens to be the sum of 5308, the A.M. foundation year of Constantinople, and 666, the Apocalyptic Number of the Beast (Rev. 13.18), whose proximity by three decimal units to the 696 years of the ‘horoscope’ recorded by Kedrenos prompts the thought that 666, rather than 696, was the original calculation ascribed to Valens.¹¹⁸ The reference to future cycles recurring in 6516 and until the end of the world clearly implies, first, that the world will last beyond 6516, and second, that it will end after a complete twelve-year cycle. Is it coincidence, then, that the 545th cycle was due to end in 6539, which would be the millennium of the Resurrection according to the chronology of the tenth-century chronicle transmitted by Kedrenos?¹¹⁹ Around the year 1000, a major work of the Arab astrologer Abu Mashar was translated into Greek. Parisinus graecus 2423 contains two short astronomical treatises datable to 1003 and 1007 respectively.¹²⁰ And it is surely not irrelevant to mention, in the context of all this astrology and astronomy, that a mathematical textbook was produced by one Romanos of Seleucia in 1008.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Published from Marc. gr. 324 in *CCAG*, II, 144ff. For other examples of the zodiacal *dodekaeteris*, see *CCAG* V, 1, pp. 172, 241; V, 4, pp. 171ff.; VIII, 3, p. 189; IX, 2, p. 170.

¹¹⁸ Such an updating would be entirely consistent with the adjustments made to the ‘horoscope of Islam’ (see above), and the significance of 666 was certainly discussed by eschatologists: see, e.g. MS Karakallou 14, fol.; cf. Podskalsky, *Reichseschatologie*, 97.

¹¹⁹ See above.

¹²⁰ Fol. 150–152; some of the astronomical material in the manuscript was studied by G. Botte, “Un traité byzantin d’astronomie (XI^e s.)”, *Mémoire de l’Université Catholique de Louvain*, 1968.

¹²¹ See A. Diller, in *Isis* 36 (1946), 132.

The unusual conjunction of stars and saints in the reign of Basil II was without precedent and was not to recur. The same can be said of Basil's marital status: Basil was the only Byzantine emperor who never married, never wavering in his official celibacy at any time in his forty-nine year reign. The only hint of an explanation offered by the sources is Psellos' report of the advice the rebel Bardas Skleros gave to Basil after their reconciliation in 989. According to Psellos, Skleros advised Basil

to abolish over-powerful commands, and to let none of the military enjoy great possessions, but to wear them down with unjust exactions, so as to keep them occupied at home. He advised him to let no woman into the palace and not to make himself accessible to anyone, nor to let many people into his plans.¹²²

The Machiavellian advice is too much like Psellos' idealised portrait of Basil to be entirely credible. Basil certainly had to be wary of women after the career of his own mother, Theophano, and the destabilising effect she had had on the succession during his lifetime. Leo the Deacon hints that she may have had a hand in the premature death of Basil's father, Romanos II, and she was definitely involved in the overthrow and murder of her second husband, Nikephoros II Phokas.¹²³ However, without a woman in the Palace there could be no purple-born heir to the throne. Basil II grew old in the knowledge that he was going to be succeeded by his almost equally aged brother Constantine VIII, whose two surviving daughters, Zoe and Theodora, were unmarried. Theodora entered a convent, and no attempt was made to make a new match for Zoe after the death of her fiancé, the western emperor Otto III, in 1002.

Did Basil feel that his personal salvation was more important than the dynastic succession to an earthly empire that might not have a future after the millennial anniversary of the Resurrection? That he was at least conventionally pious is clear not only from his Psalter and Menologion, but also from his patronage of religious foundations. He provided for the repair of Hagia Sophia after the 989 earthquake;¹²⁴ he restored the ἄγιον λουμα, the ritual bath at the Blachernai church;¹²⁵ he established monastic communities at the church

¹²² Psellos, I, 17.

¹²³ Leo. Diac., 31, 85–9; Skylitzes, 279–83.

¹²⁴ Leo. Diac., 176

¹²⁵ *Scriptores Originum Constantinopolitanarum*, ed. T. Preger (Leipzig, 1901–07), 283.

of St Mokios in Constantinople,¹²⁶ at the church of the Archangel Michael at Sosthenion on the Bosphorus,¹²⁷ and, almost certainly, at the church of St John the Theologian at the Hebdomon, which appears later in the eleventh century as a richly endowed imperial 'pious foundation' (εὐαγής οἶκος).¹²⁸ Basil's special interest in this foundation is evident both from the sources which credit him with building—i.e. rebuilding—the church, and from the well-attested fact that he insisted on being buried there.¹²⁹ Such insistence was extraordinary for an emperor of the Macedonian dynasty, which had always identified in death with the mausoleum of Constantine at the church of the Holy Apostles.¹³⁰ The only predecessors of Basil II who had been buried in their own foundations were the interlopers Romanos I Lekapenos and John I Tzimiskes.¹³¹ The conclusion must be that Basil had a very specific wish to be associated with Christ's beloved Apostle, who had a particular relevance to the Last Things, partly as the author of the Apocalypse, and partly as a result of an apocryphal belief, based on two Gospel passages (Matt. 16.28, John 21.22–3), that he was alive on earth. This belief is stated as truth in the *Life of St Andrew the Fool* and it is echoed, without being denied, in the *Life of St Basil the Younger*.¹³² Given the didactic purpose of both texts, it must have been taken very seriously.¹³³

4–9, although credit for this was also given to the patriarch Nicholas II: G. Sola, "Giambografi sconosciuti del secolo XI" *Roma e l'Oriente* 11 (1916), 26–7; cf. M. Lauxtermann, above, p. 200.

¹²⁶ As attested by a 12th-c. epigram, ed. Sp. Lampros in *Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων* 8 (1911), 127–8; cf. C. Mango.

¹²⁷ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. J.-L. van Dieten, CFHB 11 (Berlin-New York, 1975), I, 373; cf. R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin*, I: *Le siège de Constantinople et le Patriarcat oecuménique*, III: *Les églises et les monastères* (Paris, 1969), 346–9.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 267–9; cf. N. Oikonomidès, "L'évolution de l'organisation administrative de l'empire byzantin au XI^e siècle (1025–1118)", *TM* 6 (1976), 139–40.

¹²⁹ Skylitzes, 369; Yahya, III, 481–2; S.G. Mercati, "Sull' Epigrafi di Basilio II Bulgaroctonos", *Collectanea Bizantina*, 2 vols. (Rome, 1970), I, 230; see Holmes and Lauxtermann, in this volume, above, pp. 63, 211.

¹³⁰ P. Grierson, "The Tombs and Obits of the Byzantine Emperors (337–1042)", *DOP* 16 (1962), 27–9, 57–9; Dagron, *Empereur et prêtre*, 212–14.

¹³¹ Grierson, "Tombs and Obits", 28–9.

¹³² *Life of Andrew the Fool*, ed. Rydén, 218–19; *Life of Basil the Younger*, ed. S.G. Vilinskij in *Žap[iski] Imperatorskogo novorossijskogo universiteta* (Odessa, 1911), 311, and ed. A.N. Veselovskij in *Sbornik Otdela russkogoazyka i slovesnosti Imperatorskoj akademii nauk* 46 (St Petersburg, 1891), 6, suppl., 50–51.

¹³³ There is an eschatological note in Basil's verse epitaph, ed. Mercati, "Sull' Epigrafi", line 5: καὶ σαββατίζω τῶν ἀμετρήτων πόνων. This alludes not only, as

Basil II thus emerges as a very individual mixture of hard-line autocracy and ascetic piety. In this, he may remind us of his younger western contemporary and counterpart, the half-Greek Otto III, whose strange behaviour also lends itself to interpretation in terms of an imperial response to the year 1000.¹³⁴ But with Otto III we re-enter the western debate about the terrors of the first millennium, to face what is perhaps the most irreducible defence in the terror-denialist position. Basil II, like Otto III, did not spend all his time in rapt expectation of the Second Coming; he spent a lot of time conducting business as usual, doing things he would have done anyway if the millennium had not been there—defeating rebels and, in the process, marrying his sister to Vladimir of Kiev; reconquering Bulgaria; stabilising and expanding the empire's Italian and Asian frontiers; working towards a balance of power with the Fatimid rulers of Egypt. Equally, he did not do certain things which he should perhaps have done had he been in a truly apocalyptic frame of mind: above all, he failed to do his prophetic duty as the Last Emperor by marching to Jerusalem and destroying the power of Islam.

Is it possible to accommodate this obstacle without compromising the power of the year 1000? One possible solution is suggested by a recent book entitled *Medieval Futures*.¹³⁵ The nine contributors to this volume explore various mundane and materialistic strategies for the future which co-existed, in the high and later Middle Ages, with traditional eschatological modes of thought. The co-existence is particularly striking in the case of Dante. His *Divine Comedy* is a fervent apocalyptic vision with an urgent message of salvation; towards the end of his ascent through the spheres of heaven, he finds out that there are now very few places left to be filled among the company of the blessed (Par. XXX.131): the end is nigh. At the same time, the narrator is openly concerned with his enduring fame as a poet, and declares, to the soul of his ancestor Cacciaguida, that he is afraid of being forgotten 'among the people who will call this time ancient' (Par. XVII.120).

Lauxtermann observes, to the Hebdomon (above p. 211), but also to God's resting on the seventh day of Creation, which was thought to prefigure the seventh and final age of the world.

¹³⁴ On Otto, see Shepard, in this volume, with bibliography; Landes, "The Fear of an Apocalyptic Year", 99, 119, 123, 130, 144.

¹³⁵ J.A. Burrow and Ian P. Wei (eds.), *Medieval Futures. Attitudes to the Future in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2000), especially the contributions by J.-C. Schmitt, I.P. Wei, and P. Boitani.

Another solution is indicated by Andrew of Caesarea in his commentary on Revelation 20.8–10, the verses which tell of the Devil's release, his mobilisation of Gog and Magog, their war against the saints, and their final destruction by fire. Andrew concludes:

Let us, who have been taught by the Saviour Christ to pray not to be led into temptation, now do this fervently, acknowledging our weakness, and pray that we may be delivered from the trial of the things that have been prophesied, and neither behold the coming of the false Christ, nor the mobilisation of the aforesaid nations, nor any fatal danger which might force us to apostasise from our saving faith. But keeping the witness of conscience intact, as far as possible, and displaying by good works the fervour of our love for Christ who redeemed us with his precious blood, let us hope for the enjoyment of the good things of eternity.¹³⁶

The idea that God could intervene personally to change the cosmic programme that he had set up was ultimately fundamental to the Orthodox Christian belief in an all-powerful, personal Deity. We find it, for example, in the apocalyptic vision of Niphon,¹³⁷ and in the argument put forward by the emperor Manuel I in defence of astrology, that the events portended by the stars can be guaranteed, if good, or averted, if bad, by prayer and supplication.¹³⁸

So if Basil II did not do his prophetic duty by attempting to conquer Jerusalem in time for the millennium, it could have been because the eschatological vision which he shared with his subjects did not impinge on the political prudence which went with the job of being emperor: they were in different compartments, corresponding to the distinction which Aquinas later drew between the prophetic future and the natural future of causes whose effects could be predicted.¹³⁹ Alternatively or additionally, given his celibate piety, Basil may have consciously tried not to behave like the last emperor, hoping and praying that by his personal devotion, the prayers of the monks he supported, and the intercession of the Mother of God, St John the Theologian and all the saints, God would be moved to grant a further stay of execution to the empire and the world. Either way, one thing seems clear: Eastern Christians, like Western Christians, at the

¹³⁶ Ed. Schmid, 226–7.

¹³⁷ See above.

¹³⁸ *CCAG*, V 1, 122.

¹³⁹ See I.P. Wei, in Burrow and Wei, *Medieval Futures*, 31–3.

end of the first millennium had a strong sense that the end was close, but unlike the early Christians, few within the Church actually wanted it to happen. The terrors of the year 1000 are exactly mid-way, in psychological as well as chronological terms, between the hope of the early Church, and the awe and angst of knowing, at the end of the second millennium, how fragile and perishable are the conditions which sustain life on this tiny planet in an otherwise unremarkable solar system.

*Appendix: texts predicting the end of the world in
Anno Mundi 6500 or 6533*¹⁴⁰

1a. Anonymous treatise *Enumeration of the years of the consummation*, dating the Second Coming of Christ to 1000 years from his first appearance in the flesh: argument based entirely on Daniel and New Testament texts, including Revelation.¹⁴¹

1b. A later version of the same text, dating the Second Coming to 1000 years from Christ's Resurrection.¹⁴²

2. Theophanios the Monk, *Chronological composition on the consummation of the age, or of the world*, A.D. 710 (or 821–2?)¹⁴³

(a) The numerical value of the name Jesus (Ἰησοῦς) is 888, which added to the year of his birth gives A.M. 6388 [= A.D. 880, Byz. era]. There are now 170 years left.

(b) By astronomical calculation the complete world time-span consists of 12 revolutions of 532 years (the combined solar and lunar cycle). $12 \times 532 = 6384$ [= A.D. 876].

(c) In the *Apocalypse of St James* it says that 'through the mercy of the Saviour we have been granted two extra sixtieths'. This means that 120 years have been added to the world's lifespan, as Christ confirmed when he blessed his disciples saying 'Peace be to all', and making the sign indicating the number 6500 (ϥϥ).

¹⁴⁰ These texts were all identified by Podskalsky, *Reichseschatologie*, 92–8, except where otherwise indicated.

¹⁴¹ Ἀπαρίθμησις τῶν χρόνων τῆς συντελείας, ed. I. Ševčenko in *TM* 14 (2002) from Scor. Y-III 7, fols. 315r–316v: not noted by Podskalsky, who mentions only the later version of this text (1b: see following note).

¹⁴² Par. gr. 1111, fols. 52r–54r; cf. Ševčenko, op. cit.

¹⁴³ Ed. E. von Dobschütz, 'Coislinianus 296', *BZ* 12 (1903), 534–67, at 550–1.

3. *Historia ecclesiastica*, the commentary on the Divine Liturgy most commonly attributed to Germanos of Constantinople (715–730)].¹⁴⁴ This includes the statement that ‘When the bishop blesses the people, it indicates that the future coming of Christ will be in the year 6500, as shown by the figure ϡϣ’:¹⁴⁵ a version of the prophecy attributed by Theophanios (text no. 2) to the *Apocalypse of St James*.

4. Basil, Metropolitan of Neopatra, *Commentary on the prophets*, unpublished in Patmiacus 31 and Vat. gr. 1687. In the commentary on Daniel, he states:¹⁴⁶

Know indeed that that the middle of the seventh age shows the fulfilment, just as the seventh hour of the day shows the revelation of evening. Since the millennium of Christ has precedence, by this number the undoubted conclusion is reached that in the middle of the seventh is the end. If anyone should enquire as to the basis of this figure, let him ask the Beloved disciple of Christ, and he will make it dazzlingly clear, for he says in his divine Apocalypse, ‘And I saw the souls of those who were hacked to death for Jesus’ name beneath the sanctuary, crying, “Until when O Lord will you not avenge us of those who oppress us?”’.¹⁴⁷ And a voice was given them, “Until a thousand years of the Lamb”.’ (Patm. 31, fol. 257r.)

¹⁴⁴ Ed. and trans. P. Meyendorff, *St Germanos of Constantinople, On the Divine Liturgy* (New York, 1984).

¹⁴⁵ The text may have been composed later than Germanos, and the passage may be an interpolation, but it certainly existed by the late ninth century, when Anastasius Bibliothecarius incorporated it into his Latin translation: see S. Pétridès, “Traité liturgiques de Saint Maxime et de Saint Germain traduits par Anastase le bibliothécaire”, *Revue de l’Orient chrétien* 10 (1905), 289–364; F.E. Brightman, “The *Historia Mystagogica* and other Greek Commentaries on the Byzantine Liturgy”, *Journal of Theological Studies* 9 (1908), 248–67, 387–97; N. Borgia, “La ‘Εξήγησις di San Germano e la versione latina di Anastasio Bibliotecario”, *Roma e l’Oriente* 2 (1911), 144–56, 219–28, 286–96, 346–54.

¹⁴⁶ Patm. 31, fol. 257r: Ἰστέον δὴ ὅτι τοῦ ἐβδοματικοῦ αἰῶνος ἡ μεσότης τὴν ἀνακλήρωσιν δείκνυσιν, ὥς τῆς ἡμέρας ἡ ὥρα ἐβδόμη, τῆς ἐσπέρας τὴν δῆλωσιν· ἡ δὲ χιλιονταετηρίς Χριστοῦ τὰ πρεσβεῖα ἔχουσα, τῷ ἀριθμῷ ἀναμφίβολον κέκτηται τὸ συμπέρασμα, ὅτι εἰς τὸ ἡμῖς τῆς ἐβδομάδος ἐστὶ τὸ τέλος. Εἰ δέ τις ἔροιτο τοῦ τοῦ χρόνου βᾶσιμον, πυθέτω τὸν φιλούμενον ὑπὸ τοῦ Κυρίου μαθητὴν, καὶ αὐτὸς λευκότερον σαφηνεῖ· φησὶ γὰρ ἐν τῇ θείᾳ ἀποκαλύψει αὐτοῦ, ‘Καὶ εἶδον τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν πεπελεκημένων διὰ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ὑπὸ κάτω τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου βοῶσας καὶ λεγούσας, “ἕως πότε οὐκ ἐκδικεῖς ἡμᾶς Κύριε ἀπὸ τῶν θλιψάντων ἡμᾶς;” καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς φωνή, “ἕως χιλίων ἐτῶν τοῦ ἀρνίου”’.

¹⁴⁷ A loose citation of Rev. 6.9–11, with some contamination from Rev. 20.4 (πεπελεκισμένων instead of ἐσφαγμένων) which may go back to Hippolytus, *Commentary on Daniel*, 4.22. However, Hippolytus follows the biblical text in giving the answer

Basil concludes with the remark that 'the time of the consummation is near, we must be contrite; the end is at the door, let us not be neglectful' (fol. 260v). This suggests that the author was writing in the ninth or tenth century.

5. *Life of Niphon* (BHG 1371z) (10th century, though set in the 4th). The saint sees a vision in which Christ goes through the seven books representing the ages of the world, and is so disgusted with the seventh that he decides to close it in the middle.¹⁴⁸

6. Niketas the Paphlagonian, *Letter to the visiting western bishops*, early-mid 10th c.¹⁴⁹

Niketas reassures the bishops as to the authenticity of the Revelation of John, on which they have come to consult him. The 1000 years of the Lamb are to be taken seriously and only 50 are left to run. After a paragraph citing authorities for the canonical status of Revelation, Niketas supports the millennial date with the calculations (see above, no. 2) based on the name of Jesus, the 12 532 years, and the 120-year extension (citing the *Historia ecclesiastica* of 'St Basil the Great'). He explains the mystical significance of the end coming in the middle of the seventh millennium, and asserts that the 1000 years are to be reckoned from the Crucifixion: thus, $1000 + 33 + 8 = 1041$. It is already the evening of the world's sabbath, and the prevailing corruption of Church and Empire show that the end is nigh.

7. Note concerning the birth of Antichrist, in connection with a passage dealing with events of 995: 'Antichrist is born, as St John says [Rev. 20.2f.?], 1000 years after the birth of Christ'.¹⁵⁰

to the martyrs' question: they are told to relax until their number is complete. The 'thousand years of the Lamb' may be Basil's own invention; the expression is used by another tenth-century author, Niketas the Paphlagonian (text no. 6).

¹⁴⁸ Ed. A.V. Rystenko, *Materialien zur Geschichte der byzantinisch-slavischen Literatur und Sprache* (Odessa, 1928; repr. Leipzig, 1982), 88; for the date, see L. Rydén, "The Date of the Life of St Niphon, BHG 1371z", in *Greek and Latin Studies in Memory of Caius Fabricius*, ed. S.-T. Teodorsson (Gothenburg, 1990), 33–40.

¹⁴⁹ Ed. L. Westerink, "Niketas the Paphlagonian on the End of the World", *Essays in Memory of Basil Laourdas* (Thessaloniki, 1975), 177–95, text 191–5. Not mentioned by Podskalsky; cf. Brandes, "Liudprand", 456–7.

¹⁵⁰ Ed. from Dresd. A 187 by E. von Dobschütz, "Eine Sammelhandschrift des 16. Jahrhunderts", *BZ* 15 (1906), 261–2; cf. Brandes, "Liudprand", 462.

8. Anthimos, *chartophylax* of the Great Church, verses predicting the end of the world in A.M. 6533 = A.D. 1025.¹⁵¹

Dating is based entirely on Scripture (Dan. 9.27, Is. 7.14–16, Ps. 104.8). Before spelling out the year, Anthimos says he is ‘writing 66 years’. If this is not a mutilated reference to 666, the number of the Beast (Rev. 13.18), it could indicate the number of years still to go until the End, in which case Anthimos was writing in 959.

¹⁵¹ Ed. from Vat. gr. 341, executed in 1021, by G. Mercati, ‘Anthimi de proximo saeculi fine’, *Opere minori*, II (1897–1906), StT 77 (Rome, 1937), 298–304. The text is preserved in two other manuscripts, Par.gr. 1111 fol. 55r–v and Athos, Karakallou fols. 250v–251v, of which the latter specifies Anthimos’ title; cf. Podskalsky, *Reichseschatologie*, 97, n. 574.

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